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The following letter was addressed to Mr. George Livermore in reply to some enquiries he made for me in reference to the authorship of the "World Unmasked" &c.

Copy

Boston Dec 16.
1847.

Mr Livermore. The ass of the work you referred to. viz. The "World Unmasked", &c. is found in Modn Hist Univm pp 146-147. It is there attributed to Muralt, a Swiss, on the authority of the Abbe Gregoire, I think. See Univt Miscellany by Viddler. 1. 18 &c. Histoire des Sectes Religieuses" 114. The whole title of the World

Unmasked is very long, but
I can give it if wished. I have
since been led to doubt whether
the work was written by Murra
The ed. of 1736 pub. in English, as
"translated from the French of
Madame Kenber." She is put
down among the European
Universalists in Muenscher's
Elements of Dogmatic History
translated by Murdock. New
-Haven 1830, pp. 282. 283. A short
Notice of Madame K. may be
found in Limborch. The
principal proof that she was
the Author, is the English catalo
from which I have extracted
the fact that in the ed of 17
it is said to have been trans
from the French of Madame K
Such are all the facts at present
in my possession.

Yours resp'y

Thos Whittemore

THE WORLD UNMASK'D:

OR, THE *Philoſopher the greateſt Cheat*; IN Twenty-Four DIALOGUES.

To which is added,

The STATE of SOULS ſeparated from their BODIES:

Being an EPISTOLARY TREATISE, wherein is proved, by a Variety of Arguments, deduced from Holy Scripture, that the PUNISHMENTS of the WICKED will not be ETERNAL; and all Objections againſt it ſolved.

To which is prefix'd,

A Large INTRODUCTION, evincing the ſame Truth from the Principles of NATURAL RELIGION.

Tranſlated from the French.

THE SECOND EDITION:

To which are added,

Two LETTERS concerning the MISTAKEN POINT of HONOUR among WRITERS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

LONDON:

Printed for A. MILLAR, oppoſite to *Katharine-Street* in the *Strand*. M.DCC.XLIII.

TO THE BOOKSELLER.

THESE Dialogues having been communicated to me, I thought you wou'd not be diſpleaſed with giving them to the Public. Perhaps, on peruſing them, you will have ſome reaſon to believe they may turn to Account.

Novelty has Charms for the whole World. In theſe Pieces every thing is new, except only the Subſtance or Eſſence of Truth, which cannot be ſo. To which it may be added, the Form of them is Original; and it would be no eaſy matter to find any thing already written in this way.

An Attempt of this nature may, perhaps, ſtartle ſome honeſt Perſons of the old Stamp, who loſe all patience at the bare mention of the Term Novelty;

but they may elsewhere find wherewithal to satisfy their Taste for Antiquity.

I very much fear, that Persons of too much Gravity will soon be disgusted at the Gaiety of the Stile. If so, they will not want Books that are more grave as to the Stile than the Matter.

The Methodical Learned will meet with nothing here to their mind. They will to no purpose look for Method in Dialogues, which are managed in a Walk. Every thing savours of that Ease and Liberty, which the Walk and the Air they breathe, in the Spring, produce among intimate Friends.

You will be able to judge, when you read them, whether the Number of Persons of this latter Taste, will prevail over those of the opposite Taste.

I am, Sir, *&c*

A LETTER *from a Friend of the* Author. *To Mr.* D ****

SIR,

I Here send you the Manuscript Dialogues, which you desired of me. You want to know my Thonghts on them. Is

Is it reasonable that I should prevent your Judgment; wou'd it not be more equitable to allow you to see things with your own Eyes?

What you had been told of them began to give you some Prejudice against them; so that I may have some right to justify them so far, as to reduce you to an Equilibrium. *However, I shall not enter on that Task; it wou'd be proceeding against the Design of this Work, which requires no Apology, and, perhaps, will not easily admit of one.*

Here, Sir, I ought to explain myself. An Attempt to justify the Substance of self-evident Truths, is a mere Banter. An Attempt to justify things that are barely accidental, and only different manners of viewing, or explaining the True, *wou'd be superfluous; since the Author himself justifies them only in that respect. He gives his Thoughts only as a sort of Conjectures, or if you please, as* Reveries; *by the help of which, every Man considers the True in itself. To pretend to justify the Form of them, wou'd be to undertake an Impossibility; for to justify it*

to the Taſte of ſome Perſons, wou'd be to incur the Cenſure of ſeveral others. Men of Gravity cannot bear the juſtification of the Pleaſantry and Gaiety, which reigns among the Actors of theſe Pieces; at leaſt, they will be diſpleaſed to ſee them talk in that Strain on the moſt ſerious Subjects; of this ſort is their Diſcourſe on Truth or Religion.

On the other hand, Perſons of a gay Turn of Mind, who have been uſed to exerciſe their Humour on Nothings, *or frivolous Pleaſantries, (Perſons to whom Truth appears gloomy, becauſe they are unacquainted with it, and grow melancholy on the leaſt Attention to the True, which carries them out of their Element) ſuch Perſons, I ſay, will not allow a Man to juſtify the* Serious *of the Subjects here examin'd to the bottom, and which, conſequently, require ſome Attention.*

Perſons of this Character may indeed be more tractable than thoſe of the contrary Character: without renouncing Gaiety or Pleaſantry, which is inſeparable from it, they may contract a familiarity with Truth, and come at laſt

laſt to have a reliſh of it, and be pleaſed with it as their own Element, as the Element of Joy and Serenity.

Theſe Dialogues, by a ſmall Sample, ſhew this is not impoſſible: and it appears that the Friends here introduced, do not quit their own Element, even when they are moſt attentive on explaining the Subſtance of Truth.

Thoſe who employ their Genius on abſtract Subjects, will here find nothing that demands too much of their Application. If they are ſuch as are ſatisfied with Ideas rather than Words, and require a Preciſion in Ideas, without trifling on Expreſſions; they will find ſome Strokes which will not diſpleaſe them.

If they are accuſtomed to diſtinguiſh what is Original, from what is borrowed or foiſted in, they will eaſily excuſe ſeveral Irregularities, which would be unpardonable in a Man of Study; but are pardonable in a Reveur, *or one who delivers his Thoughts only as* Reveries *. *Such as cannot reliſh the*

* In the ſeventeenth and eighteenth Dialogues, the Reader may ſee what gave Occaſion to the Terms *Reveur* and *Reveries*.

True, *unless it is treated geometrically, or with a rigorous Exactness of Terms, will never be able to like so immethodical a way of Writing.*

The impatient Part of Mankind, who decide without understanding the drift of a Discourse; will here have fresh Occasion to exert themselves. As most of the Subjects are only slightly touched on, by Strokes which rather give a glimpse of Truth, than unfold it to View, their Precipitation will give them frequent Opportunities of pronouncing this or that false.

Devotées of a certain kind, who can relish nothing that relates to Religion, unless it be supported with a croud of Scripture-Quotations, will certainly disapprove of the Omission of such Passages.

You see now, Sir, how impossible it wou'd be to succeed in justifying the Dialogues to Persons of different Tastes. It is better to leave every one the Liberty of judging for himself, if every one can be allow'd that Liberty. By that Liberty, I mean an impartial Disposition, or perfect Neutrality, not determin'd by any secret Inclination or private

private Interest to pronounce pro *or* con. *No other Liberty seems to me sufficient for being a competent Judge; because without that, a Man wou'd be at once Judge and Party.*

I am, *&c.*

N. B. These two Volumes are a complete Translation of the two Volumes of Dialogues, and two of Letters.

1. ANTIQUITATES CHRISTIANÆ: or, THE HISTORY OF THE LIFE AND DEATH of the HOLY JESUS: As also the *Lives, Acts* and *Martyrdoms* of his APOSTLES. In two Parts. The first part, containing *The* LIFE *of* CHRIST, written by JER. TAYLOR, late Lord Bishop of *Down* and *Connor*. The second, containing *The Lives of the* APOSTLES, with an Enumeration and some brief Remarks upon their first Successors in the five great *Apostolical Churches:* By WILLIAM CAVE, D. D. *Chaplain in Ordinary to his Majesty.* By whom also is added, *An Apparatus,* or DISCOURSE INTRODUCTORY to the whole Work, concerning the three great Dispensations of the Church, *Patriarchal, Mosaical* and *Evangelical. The* TENTH EDITION, adorned with curious *Sculptures.*

2. LETTERS concerning the *Religion essential to Man*; as it is distinct from what is merely an Accession to it. In two parts. By the Author of the *World Unmask'd:* or, *The State of Souls separated from their Bodies.* Translated from the *French.*

3. Free THOUGHTS concerning SOULS: In Four Essays.

(1) *Of the Human Soul considered in its own Nature.*

(2.) *Of the Human Soul compared with the Souls of Brutes.*

(3.) *Of the supposed pre-existent State of Souls.*

(4.) *Of the Future State of Souls.*

To which is added, an ESSAY on Creation.

4. The HISTORY of the *Propagation* of *Christianity,* and the Overthrow of *Paganism:* Wherein the *Christian Religion* is confirmed; the Rise and Progress of Heathenish Idolatry is considered; the Overthrow of Paganism, and the spreading of Christianity, in the several Ages of the Church, is explained; the present State of the Heathens is enquired into; and Methods for their Conversion proposed. In 2 vols. The Third Edition corrected, with Additions. By ROBERT MILLAR, A M. *The Bishop of* London, *in his Pastoral Letters, p.* 133 *recommends this Book as written by a faithful and judicious Hand.*

THE World Unmaſked; OR, THE PHILOSOPHER the greateſt Cheat.

DIALOGUE I.

PHILO, a *Lawyer*; CRITO, a *Philoſopher*; and ERASTUS, a *Merchant*.

Philo. DEAR *Eraſtus*, I am told you are much changed ſince I ſaw you laſt; that you are become a *Devoté*, or *Pietiſt*.

Crito. It is matter of ſurprize to ſeveral; but it would be ſtill more ſo, if you could gain us over to the ſame Party?

Eraſtus. That wou'd be pleaſant indeed; eſpecially, if I ſhould gain you without attempting it.

Crito. How, *Eraſtus!* wou'd you have ſo little Zeal, as not to endeavour to make Proſelytes, and increaſe your Party?

Eraſtus. Were I of any Party, the Honour that wou'd be done me by ſuch Proſelytes as you, wou'd not allow me to neglect them.

Philo. But is the World really mistaken, *Erastus*, in imagining you are become a *Devoté* or *Pietist?*

Erastus. When you have had your Jest out, I'll speak seriously; in the mean time, I assure you, I claim neither of those Appellations.

Philo. How so, *Erastus?* Is it because they do you not honour enough?

Erastus. That is not the Reason, *Philo.* When taken in a favourable Sense, they wou'd do me too much; in any other Sense, they would be the direct contrary of my Character.

Crito. How then do you understand them, *Erastus?*

Erastus. Thus: The Appellation of *Devoté*, taken in a good Sense, ought to denote a Person devoted to God: and that of a *Pietist*, a pious Person; which comes to the same. In this sense, as I said before, they wou'd do me too much honour; and I am far from assuming them. In the vulgar Sense, the Appellation of *Devoté* denotes a Bigot, and very often a Hypocrite; as that of *Pietist*, denotes one possessed with a Party-spirit, one out of humour with all Mankind, and who studies to distinguish himself on a Principle of Vanity. I own, I do not take this to be my Character. Pray, tell me, Gentlemen, in which of these two Senses, you have bestow'd the Title of *Pietist* or *Devoté* on me?

Crito. Not in the latter, you may be assur'd.

Erastus.

Eraſtus. Then it muſt be in the former.

Philo. Can that be a Queſtion, *Eraſtus?*

Eraſtus. If I take you right, your Character of a Perſon truly pious, comprehends a Zeal, or Party-Spirit, which endeavours to gain Proſelytes, or ſuch as call themſelves ſo, in order to enlarge the Number of its Partizans. Are theſe your Notions of Piety?

Crito. Not altogether, I own.

Philo. They are ſtill leſs mine.

Eraſtus. Now *Crito* is beginning to contradict himſelf; I deſire he will be conſiſtent.

Crito. If I might be allow'd the Liberty, *Eraſtus*, I ſhould ſay you are a little malicious, in making your Friends fall into Contradictions.

Eraſtus. Not I, *Crito*; I only let them ſee it.

Crito. Since you are reſolved to give no Quarter, and muſt be anſwer'd directly, I ſhall freely own, that when I connected the Ideas of Piety with thoſe of Party-Zeal, I form'd only confus'd Notions, which preſented nothing diſtinct to my Mind.

Philo. I can ſay the ſame for myſelf, *Eraſtus.*

Eraſtus. I am ſurpriz'd that Philoſophers and Lawyers, Men who make profeſſion of advancing nothing but what they have diſtinct Ideas of, can be ſatisfied with what is confuſed and indeterminate.

Philo. You ſee, *Crito*, how he handles us.

Crito. It is no more, than what we in ſome meaſure deſerve, for beginning the Attack.

But, Raillery apart; ſince you are not diſpos'd to paſs for a *Devoté*, either in the good or bad Senſe of that Term, I beg to know, *Eraſtus*, what you would paſs for.

Philo. For an honeſt Man, without doubt.

Crito. Or rather, for a good Man.

Eraſtus. Is it abſolutely neceſſary I ſhould paſs for ſomething? It is not my Inclination, dear *Crito.* I am of opinion that one ought to think of becoming a good Man, before one pretends to paſs for ſuch.

Crito. Are you not a good Man then, *Eraſtus?*

Eraſtus. I may, perhaps, be enough ſo to bear the Name; but muſt own, that to be a good Man, according to my Idea, implies ſomething more than what is comprehended in the common Notion; in my way of thinking, a Man devoted to God and a good Man, are almoſt the ſame thing.

Philo. At that rate, there will be but few good Men among thoſe who would paſs for ſuch.

Eraſtus. One of the ſureſt Marks that a Man is not really ſuch, is a deſire of appearing ſo. A Man in Trade never takes more pains to appear rich, than when his Affairs are in the worſt Situation.

Crito. But I wou'd fain know, *Eraſtus*, how you came by theſe Thoughts. Who is the Maſter that has form'd ſo good a Scholar?

Eraſtus. Should I tell you, *Crito*, you wou'd perhaps endeavour to exceed me, as you

you did formerly at College. I have not forgot your Superiority in Learning; and how do you know but I may be capable of Jealouſy?

Philo. If there is any reaſon to fear *Crito* on that ſcore, you muſt allow it is not the ſame in regard to me, and that you may communicate your Secret to me without any danger.

Eraſtus. Philo, I have not much leſs reaſon to miſtruſt you. The Lawyers are a Set of Gentlemen, who go through with all they undertake. What wou'd become of a poor Trader, divided between a thouſand Cares and Articles of Buſineſs, if he fell into the hands of two ſuch Philoſophers as you?

Philo. Really, *Crito*, I am at a loſs what courſe to take for getting any thing out of him.

Eraſtus. It ſhall be your own fault, *Philo*, if you do not oblige me to anſwer you. Had you ſpoke to me ſeriouſly, I ſhould have anſwer'd you in the ſame Strain. Perhaps you imagin'd that, ſince the World has been pleas'd to beſtow on me the Character of a *Pietiſt*, I had loſt all reliſh for Raillery.

Crito. You have too much natural Senſe, *Eraſtus*, to be ſo ſoon ſtupified with *Pietiſm* or *Devotion.*

Eraſtus. Hold, *Crito*, is it in the good or in the bad Senſe that *Pietiſm* or *Devotion* ſtupifies a Man?

Crito. You ſtop me ſhort, *Eraſtus*; and I own, have again caught me in the Confuſed, and ſpeaking according to vulgar Opinions.

Philo. You might have pleaded in your Defence, *Crito*, that when you ſuppoſed Devotion could ſtupify, it was in the bad Senſe of the Word.

Crito. That, *Philo*, wou'd have been but a poor Defence; and I ſhould have contradicted myſelf again.

Philo. And where lies the Contradiction?

Crito. It would have been but too plain; I juſt now told *Eraſtus*, that I gave him the Appellation of a *Devoté* in the good Senſe only; and here I muſt have ſuppoſed him ſuch in the bad; for a Devotion that ſtupifies, is of that kind.

Eraſtus. Crito doth himſelf juſtice with a very good Grace. He has ſpared me the trouble of pointing out a Contradiction in his Diſcourſe; on which occaſion I ſhould have ſhewn him no Favour.

Crito. I am very ſenſible of that, *Eraſtus*; and in return for your Care, I promiſe you the ſame good Office on the firſt opportunity.

Eraſtus. Well; this is acting like Friends; and I ſhall be very ſenſible of the Obligation: but I ſee *M.* coming to look for me.

Philo. Will you leave us ſo ſoon then, *Eraſtus?*

Eraſtus. I depend on meeting you again, *Philo:* I promiſed to be at a Friend's Houſe at Five; you had made me forget the Appointment;

pointment; give me leave to be as good as my Word.

Crito. We will; but on condition that you do the ſame to us, *Eraſtus.* Promiſe us then to meet us at Three to-morrow in our favourite Walk.

Eraſtus. I will certainly be there, if I can.

DIALOGUE II.

CRITO, PHILO, and ERASTUS.

Crito. I Thought I was too late, *Philo*; but I ſee *Eraſtus* is not yet come.

Philo. I think I ſee him at the bottom of this Alley, in company with another, whom I do not know.

Crito. You are miſtaken, *Philo*; he would have come alone; and not brought us an Impertinent.

Philo. My Eyes are better than yours then, *Crito:* See, he is now taking his leave of him, and coming up to us!

Crito. I perceive it, though confuſedly; and am glad he doth not bring his Companion with him; a fourth Perſon would have been troubleſome to us.

Philo. What think you of our Friend, ſince Yeſterday's Converſation?

Crito. I know not what I think of him, *Philo*; all I know of the matter is, that I have been all day impatient for the Hour of Meeting, and fear'd it at the ſame time. But what do you think of him your ſelf?

Philo. I will tell you another time; he is near enough to over-hear us.

Crito, to Eraſtus. Well met, Sir: We imagined ourſelves here before you; but I find we were miſtaken. Who was you with juſt now, pardon my Curioſity; did you leave him on our account?

Eraſtus. I was with a Friend, whom I can quit to join others, and without fear of his taking it amiſs.

Philo. His Name, *Eraſtus?*

Eraſtus. His Name is *Sermus.*

Crito. I am not unacquainted with that Name; and, if I am not miſtaken, I knew him formerly at School.

Philo. May I be allow'd to aſk you, *Eraſtus*, whether he is a *Pietiſt*, or not?

Crito. I had the ſame Curioſity; but laid a reſtraint on my ſelf, being apprehenſive of a Queſtion concerning the good, or bad Senſe.

Eraſtus. The World is pleaſed to call him ſo; but that gives him very little Concern.

Crito. But tell me, my dear Friend; what ſort of People are thoſe pretended *Pietiſts?* I have heard ſuch different Accounts of them, that I ſhould be glad to find a Man who could give me their true Character.

Eraſtus. That is much ſuch a Queſtion, *Crito*, as if I ſhould aſk you what ſort of People are the *Chriſtians.*

Crito. The *Chriſtians* are ſo numerous, that an Infinity of Diſtinctions would be neceſſary for characterizing them.

Eraſtus.

Eraſtus. The *Pietiſts*, though not very numerous, are of ſo different Characters, that we muſt make as many Diſtinctions as there are Perſons. But I am poorly qualified to talk of them; for moſt of what I know, is only by Report.

Philo. You are very far then from being engaged in their Party, as ſeveral imagine.

Eraſtus. Engaged in a Party, *Philo!* All good Men, or, if you pleaſe, the *Pietiſts*, in the good Senſe of the Word, deteſt the Choice of a Party or Sect.

Philo. They ſeem, however, to affect a way of living very different from that of the reſt of Mankind.

Eraſtus. Dear *Philo*, you ſeem to attack them with a view of engaging me in their Defence.

Crito. They would be in very good hands, had they ſuch an Advocate as you.

Philo. I own, I ſhould take a pleaſure in hearing you plead their Cauſe.

Eraſtus. Were I as able an Advocate as *Philo*, I would conſider whether I ought to undertake it, or not.

Philo. You are always on the Banter, *Eraſtus*; but, Raillery apart, may we not be favoured with your Thoughts on thoſe People?

Eraſtus. What can a Man poſitively think, *Philo*, of People whom he knows only by the Report of others. I own, all my Thoughts of them will amount only to Poſſibilities.

Philo. What mean you by that, *Eraſtus?*

Eraſtus. I think it very poſſible the World may be entirely miſtaken, in the Judgment it forms of them: that thoſe whom it moſt deſpiſes, are perhaps the moſt valuable Part of Mankind: that thoſe whom it repreſents as Fanatics, are Perſons of the ſoundeſt Senſe, and the niceſt Diſcernment. I likewiſe think it very poſſible, that, among thoſe who bear that Name, there may be Characters of all ſorts: ſome well-meaning Perſons who are only Apes of others; ſome who make a good Beginning, and a bad Ending: ſome who ſincerely do what they believe their Conſciences require; and ſome, who are void of Integrity, and after being ſeduced themſelves, ſeduce others. I farther think it poſſible for Villains to aſſume the Name and Appearances of *Pietiſm*, that they may gain their Ends with more privacy. Now, *Philo*, I aſk you in my turn, what think you of thoſe People? Will you be their Advocate? You are more fit for that Office than I am.

Philo. In that caſe, I muſt be equally fit to undertake good and bad Cauſes.

Crito. Eraſtus mawls us off; he lets us ſee what ridiculous Queſtions we aſk him about the *Pietiſts*.

Eraſtus. Suppoſe, *Philo*, that you and I were to go to a Lapidary's Shop, and upon the bare ſight of the Note on the Bag, I ſhould aſk you, what you think of the true and falſe Stones in it: What Anſwer would you make me?

Philo.

Philo. I own, I should think this Question somewhat absurd. I perceive what you drive at, *Eraſtus*, and need not wait for the Explanation of the Riddle.

Eraſtus. You very well know that in the World Men value themselves on Juſtneſs of Thought; have you never heard Perſons of that Character deal in Queſtions and Anſwers ſtill more ridiculous?

Crito. The Ladies, *Eraſtus*, are particularly excellent in that Art; if their Diſcourſe happens to fall on the poor *Pietiſts*, they paint them in fine Colours.

Eraſtus. It would be pleaſant to write down their Converſation on that Article.

Crito. I will, ſome time or other, give myſelf that Diverſion; but, if I am not miſtaken, I ſee ſomebody coming towards us.

Eraſtus. What is his Name, *Crito?*

Crito. Parmenas, one of our Senators; certainly you muſt know him.

Eraſtus. I know him only by Reputation; What is his Character?

Philo. That of ſtrongly intereſting himſelf in what concerns himſelf; and little, or not at all, in what regards others.

Eraſtus. Do you not think, *Philo*, that moſt of thoſe whom the World calls honeſt Men, are of the ſame Claſs?

Philo. I cannot tell, *Eraſtus*; but, I ſhould be very much diſpleaſed with my ſelf, were that my Character.

Eraſtus. You think then, *Philo*, that you

have a much more diſintereſted Regard for your Friends.

Philo. I am very ſenſible that Self-Love has ſome ſhare in it; but methinks, I ſhould be capable of ſerving my Friends at the expence of my own Intereſt.

Crito. Perhaps, *Philo*, it would be on condition, that Intereſt was not of the greateſt Concern.

Philo. You ſet but little value on the Friendſhip of your Friends, *Crito*.

Crito. I ſet ſo great a value on yours, that I would not put it to too ſevere a Trial; we muſt be careful of what we prize.

Philo. Till now I flatter'd my ſelf with having in you a Friend proof againſt all Trials. Tell me then what Dependance I ought to have on your Friendſhip, ſince you have ſo little on mine.

Crito. It would be unjuſt, *Philo*, to hold up my Friendſhip above its Price. I will own frankly, that I have a Friend to whom I refer all others. This Friend is *Self*. I know not whether you are acquainted with him or not. Provided that Friend and *Philo* never appear in competition, the latter may depend on my Friendſhip in its utmoſt extent, and ſo far put it to the trial. Should I promiſe more in the Affair of Friendſhip, I own my Profeſſions would be mere Quackery.

Philo. What do you think of a Friend like this, *Eraſtus?*

Eraſtus. I think, *Philo*, I could more ſafely depend

depend on his interested Friendship, than on the Protestations of Disinterestedness made by several others. There are certainly more Quacks in the Business of Friendship, than there are Retailers of infallible Remedies. *Crito*, at least, promises only what he can and will perform. Is not this plain Dealing?

Crito. I find *Philo* is not very well satisfied with my Offers of Friendship; he is angry with me, perhaps, for disabusing him of the beautiful Idea he entertain'd of it. However, I have done him a service, in thus discharging him of the Obligation, under which he would have lain, to make me a Return.

Philo. Were you not so severe, I could tell you that the Confession you have made, shall not at all diminish my Friendship for you; but you will not take my Word for it, so that I had better wait for an opportunity of proving what I say by Facts.

Crito. Do you think, *Philo*, that considerable Services done to a Friend, are always Proofs of great Disinterestedness? For my part, who do not commend my self, I find my self very capable of serving my Friends to a certain Point; Self-Love takes all Coin for current; and I know, *&c.*

Eraſtus. Crito, have you read what M. *De la Rochefoucaut* says on Self-Love?

Crito. Yes, *Eraſtus*, and frequently found my own Character there. Among other Maxims, I the other day met with this: *Self-Love*

Love seems to forget it self, when we are labouring for another's Advantage; but it is only lending upon Usury, under pretence of giving. The most disinterested Love, says the same Writer, *is no better than a Trade, an Exchange of good Offices in which Self-Love always proposes some Gain to it self.*

Eraſtus. I am afraid, my dear Friends, if we make too close an Enquiry into Friendſhip and Self-Love, the latter will put the former to flight. Let us not endeavour to see too far into the matter; we may be undeceived in a manner that will mortify us.

Philo. Nothing could be better said, *Eraſtus*; we have so many unavoidable Opportunities of seeing ourselves in a bad Likeneſs, why should we seek for more? Let us not be such Enemies to our own Repoſe.

Crito. Do you not obſerve, *Philo*, that *Eraſtus* banters us? He speaks the Language of Self-Love, which is not willing to be seen too near.

Philo. I am ready to excuſe him, on condition that you both ſup with me to-night.

Eraſtus. A very hard Bargain!

Philo. I make another, *Eraſtus*; that we all three forget we have any Self-Love about us.

DIA-

DIALOGUE III.

PHILO, CRITO, and ERASTUS.

Philo. HAVE you been long here, *Eraſtus?*

Eraſtus. An Hour and a Quarter, if I am not miſtaken.

Philo. You are a very early Riſer; we imagined we had done Wonders in your favour, and ſhould be here as ſoon as you.

Crito. You ſaw the Sun riſe, no doubt.

Eraſtus. I ſaw the Day break, and found the Sight well worth ſome hours Sleep. Beſides, the Spring is ſo ſhort a Seaſon, and at the ſame time ſo lovely in my eyes, that I was reſolved to make the beſt of it.

Philo. It is a beautiful Emblem of Youth; which paſſes ſtill quicker than the Spring.

Eraſtus. And almoſt always before we think of making the beſt of it.

Crito. Had any Man but *Eraſtus* talk'd in this manner, I ſhould imagine he regretted his not having had his ſhare of Pleaſure. In that Caſe, it would be high time to make up for what has been loſt.

Eraſtus. I do really regret my not having made all the Advantage I might have done of my Youth; and my Miſtakes in the Matter of Pleaſures.

Philo. You always confined yourſelf to ſuch moderate Pleaſures, *Eraſtus*, that one might charge you rather with taking too little than

too

too much. When Pleaſures are innocent, they become Youth perfectly well.

Eraſtus. What do you mean by innocent Pleaſures, *Philo?*

Philo. Should I tell you, *Eraſtus*, they are ſuch Pleaſures as have nothing criminal, you would laugh at my Definition.

Eraſtus. I own it would make me ſmile; but I ſhould be convinced you did not ſpeak ſeriouſly.

Crito. By ſuch a Definition, *Philo* would have informed *Eraſtus* that White is not Black.

Philo. I am too well acquainted with *Eraſtus*, to think of ſatisfying him ſo eaſily. But I own that, the more I ſeek for an exact Definition of innocent Pleaſures, the farther I am from the Diſcovery. I imagine I could better tell what they are not, than what they are.

Eraſtus. I am not ſurprized at that; becauſe the Term *Innocent* is negative, and expreſſes nothing in particular; unleſs it be that a thing is not criminal. It muſt be agreed that we often bring ourſelves off by looſe and indeterminate Expreſſions, which clear up the Difficulty almoſt as well, as when we ſay White is not Black.

Philo. Men do not look ſo nicely into Matters, *Eraſtus.*

Crito. We ſhould, perhaps, be diſpleas'd, if certain Truths were unfolded to our View.

Philo.

Philo. However, *Eraſtus*, give us your Thoughts concerning the Nature of innocent Pleaſures; or, if you pleaſe, of ſuch Pleaſures as are not criminal.

Eraſtus. Pray tell me, *Philo*, are not the Terms *Criminal* and *Culpable*, ſynonymous?

Philo. Without doubt.

Eraſtus. Why is it not ſaid that a Pleaſure is culpable, as well as that a Pleaſure is innocent?

Philo. Becauſe the Title of Culpable is applicable only to a moral Being; whereas Pleaſure is not properly a Being, but the Modification of a Being.

Eraſtus. If a Modification cannot be called culpable, can it be called innocent?

Philo. I own, *Eraſtus*, that *Innocent* being contrary to *Culpable*, neither of thoſe Terms can be applied to a Modification.

Eraſtus. You told us, *Philo*, that Pleaſure is only a Modification of a Being.

Philo. I ſay ſo again, *Eraſtus.*

Eraſtus. You will grant then, *Philo*, that Pleaſure is, properly ſpeaking, neither *innocent* nor *criminal*.

Philo. I am obliged to grant it.

Eraſtus. And that the Terms *Innocent* and *Criminal* belong only to a moral Being, of which Pleaſure is but a Modification.

Philo. I muſt grant that too.

Eraſtus. On that foot, you will not for the future aſk me for a Definition of innocent Pleaſures, or ſuch as are not criminal.

Philo.

Philo. I know not, *Eraſtus*, how I can aſk it; and yet I am not inclined to excuſe you.

Crito. If I am not much miſtaken, *Eraſtus* unravels the Difficulty very well; but at the ſame time maliciouſly pretends he cannot get over it.

Eraſtus. I appeal to you, *Crito*; is not *Philo* more malicious than I, in forcing a poor Trader out of his Sphere, to entangle him in metaphyſical Queſtions, which do not fall under his Cognizance? He can gain no Honour by the Victory. If in return, a Man ſhould drag *Philo* out of his Element, and employ him in Exchanges, Arbitrations, the Price of Silks, *&c.* I ſhould be in ſome meaſure revenged of him.

Philo. You are ſufficiently ſo without, *Eraſtus*; and I ſee it is no eaſy matter to gain an Advantage over you.

Crito. Eraſtus would fain give us the ſlip, I perceive, and decline telling us his Opinion; but he muſt explain himſelf, though againſt his Will. It is not civil thus to drop one's Friends on the Road.

Eraſtus. Pray, *Crito*, take notice that *Philo* engaged me in the Journey by ſtarting the Queſtion about innocent Pleaſures; it is his Buſineſs to purſue the Subject. Whereabouts did we leave off, *Philo?*

Philo. We had agreed that only a moral Being can be criminal or innocent.

Crito.

Crito. At that rate, we are to diſcard the Terms *Innocent* and *Criminal*, ſo much in uſe.

Eraſtus. I confeſs I ſhould be pleaſed, if one could avoid employing them. They always carry ſomething ambiguous, which obſcures the Truth. However, as Terms ſtand for no more than the Ideas fixt to them, they might ſtill be admitted, provided Men were firſt agreed on their true Signification.

Philo. What Senſe would you give them, *Eraſtus?*

Eraſtus. Were there an abſolute Neceſſity of giving them any, I ſhould ſay that Pleaſures become more or leſs innocent by the Diſpoſition of the Heart which reliſhes them.

Crito. I am entirely of your mind, *Eraſtus.* I never was ſatisfied with the Diſtinctions introduced by Divines in regard to lawful and unlawful Pleaſures.

Philo. I always thought ſome of them made the Way too ſmooth, and others too rough.

Eraſtus. They have cut themſelves out a great deal of Work, which they might have avoided, had they referred every Man to his own Conſcience for Satisfaction in this point.

Philo. That muſt be own'd, *Eraſtus*; but on the other hand, is not this Way of blind Obedience to Conſcience, expoſed to great Dangers, and numberleſs Illuſions? We have ſeen Men pretend to juſtify themſelves

in

in the moſt manifeſt Licentiouſneſs, under pretence that their Conſciences, as they ſaid, accuſed them of nothing.

Eraſtus. The beſt and ſureſt Way cannot ſecure a Man from voluntary Illuſions. Do you know any Way, *Philo*, that is inacceſſible to Illuſion, and where a Heart willing to be miſled, may not be ſeduced?

Philo. I ſhould be very much puzzled to find ſuch an one; and am pretty well ſatiſfied, that Perſons moſt ſkilful and penetrating in what relates to others, are the Bubbles of their own Illuſions; but I ſee no Remedy for this Evil, nor how one can get clear of it.

Eraſtus. Why, would you not look on Conſcience as the Key to this Labyrinth, *Philo?*

Philo. We muſt firſt enquire what Conſcience is.

Eraſtus. Do not expect Definitions of Conſcience from me; I ſhall leave that Taſk to Divines, if they think themſelves equal to it: for my part, I am ſatisfied with the Knowledge I have of it from my own Sentiments and Experience. You aſk'd me the other day, *Crito*, under what able Maſter's Tuition I had placed myſelf. I ſhall now anſwer your Queſtion: That Maſter is Conſcience, I neither know nor will have any other.

Philo. You ſurpriſe me, *Eraſtus*; I know not whether I am to take your Word for it or not.

Crito.

Crito. I should mistrust any one else, who talked in this manner; but *Erastus* is a Man of too much Veracity to be suspected of Dissimulation. I perceive I shall soon have a very different Opinion of that Master than I have hitherto entertain'd.

Erastus. I know not whether you are serious or not, *Crito*; but this Master is near enough to over-hear you.

Crito. I am very serious, *Erastus*; and am extremely angry with myself for not having hitherto set a greater Value on such a Master, nor given Attention to his Lessons. I see what might be obtained with most ease, is most neglected.

Philo. You will take it ill perhaps if I interrupt your Conversation, with asking the Hour of the Day.

Erastus. I think it is time to go home with *Crito*, and make him treat us with a Breakfast.

Crito. I am a pleasant Fellow. I had really forgot what I promised you last Night, and did not consider *Erastus* was here long before us; but that is your own fault, *Erastus*, and therefore blame nobody but yourself for it.

DIALOGUE IV.

CRITO, PHILO, and ERASTUS.

Crito. WE are firſt to-day.

Philo. *Eraſtus* muſt have overſlept himſelf, or is detain'd by ſome unſeaſonable Viſiter.

Crito. Would you imagine, *Philo*, that ſince the Arrival of *Eraſtus*, I cannot paſs one Day without ſeeing him; though he is pretty ſevere upon me, his Converſation becomes every day more agreeable to me.

Philo. His Change has not produced in him the Effect I expected. I was told he was grown gloomy, melancholy, and unfit for all Converſation. I never ſaw him ſo gay, nor behave himſelf in ſo engaging a manner.

Crito. Though he has always been gay, it was not in ſo free and eaſy a manner. I know not what can be the Cauſe of it; but it is viſible he has a Fund of Serenity within, which, if one dared, one would envy him.

Philo. Were all the *Pietiſts* like him, every Man would be one, and the Appellation would be no longer a Bugbear.

Crito. I do not know that, *Philo.* Men would willingly enjoy his Gayety and Serenity; but I queſtion whether they would, like him, obey the Voice of Conſcience in every particular, and on all occaſions. Do we know what it has already coſt him, and what it may coſt him hereafter?

Philo.

Philo. Not I, *Crito*; but methinks it is the Duty of every honeſt Man to obey his Conſcience, and I ſhould be very ſorry to diſobey mine.

Crito. Some time ago, I could have talked like you, *Philo*; but I have ſince obſerved that I endeavoured to work myſelf into a State of Inſenſibility, that I might not hear its Voice. But do not I ſee *Eraſtus* coming this way?

Philo. It is he, unleſs my Eyes deceive me.

Crito. I grow a little impatient to ſee him, and engage him a ſecond time on the Subject of Yeſterday's Converſation.

Philo. That of innocent Pleaſures, or that of Conſcience?

Crito. Both; though taking the matter right, they come to one and the ſame.

Philo. How ſo, *Crito?*

Crito. Becauſe it is the Buſineſs of every Man's Conſcience to determine what may be innocent for him.

Philo. You ſeem'd to jeſt the other day, *Crito*, when you aſk'd under what able Maſter *Eraſtus* had ſtudied; but I ſee you are in good earneſt taking the way to become learned in the ſame School.

Crito. Banter as much as you pleaſe, *Philo*; I heartily wiſh I had Courage enough, or that the Work would not coſt me too much; you ſhould then ſee whether I would not attempt it.

Philo.

Philo. But ſhould a Philoſopher like you, *Crito*, be ſtopt by Difficulties? Where would be the Courage to attempt what gives no trouble?

Crito. Your Raillery, dear *Philo*, is a good Leſſon for me; and when my Courage increaſes, I ſhall be more obliged to you than you imagine. (*To Eraſtus.*) My dear Friend, you are come very ſeaſonably, to aſſiſt me in defending myſelf againſt a Man who attacks me vigorouſly.

Eraſtus. Is it a formal Duel, or ſome malicious Surprize?

Crito. There is a good deal of Malice in the Affair; and *Philo* is the Aggreſſor.

Philo. I am an Aggreſſor, to whom, by his own Confeſſion, he has more Obligation than is imagined. Reconcile that, *Eraſtus*.

Eraſtus. I underſtand neither of you, except you explain yourſelves.

Crito. I'll tell you, *Eraſtus*; we were on the Topick of yeſterday's Converſation; I mean Conſcience and innocent Pleaſures. I aſſerted that they both came to the ſame; becauſe it is the Buſineſs of every Man's Conſcience to direct him in that point.

Eraſtus. I think your Definition very juſt, *Crito*.

Crito. I met with a very civil Return for it; he has banter'd me on my Progreſs in the ſame School with you; and I frankly acknowledge, I wanted nothing but Courage, and was afraid the Work would be too pain-

ful. This was sufficient for drawing a new Thrust upon me. He has been laughing at the Greatness of my Courage, which dares attempt only what will give me no trouble.

Eraſtus. Really, *Crito*, I think *Philo* does you a good Office in attacking you after this manner.

Crito. True; if I knew how to make my advantage of it.

Philo. We were talking ill of you, *Eraſtus*, before you came.

Eraſtus. It is not obliging to speak ill of one's Friends in their absence, unless the Discourse is continued before their faces.

Philo. We were observing that *Piety* had made no alteration in your usual Gaiety, and that you had not put on the sour, gloomy Air of the generality of *Devotees*.

Eraſtus. Is there are any necessity of joining the Idea of Sourness and Gloominess with that of Piety? I must own I see no Connection between them.

Crito. It is the common Opinion; and most People tacitly think as much.

Eraſtus. Hold there, *Crito*; it is an Impression which we receive in our Infancy, from the manner in which we have been catechised on the Articles of Religion or Piety.

Crito. You have hit it, *Eraſtus*; the Care which seems to be taken for inspiring Children with Sentiments of Piety, is what gives them the greatest Aversion to it.

Eraſtus. Thus Hypocrites and Dissemblers are form'd, who are dispos'd to give them-

ſelves ſome Conſolation by Religion or the Appearance of it, while they are at an immenſe diſtance from all that conſtitutes its Reality.

Philo. However, Men profeſs a ſovereign hatred of Diſſimulation and Hypocriſy; for which reaſon they cannot bear the falſe Devotees.

Eraſtus. The World has good reaſon for not bearing falſe Devotees. I will venture to affirm, they are the moſt deſpicable of Men; but moſt of thoſe honeſt Men, who value themſelves on deteſting Diſſimulation, may poſſibly have a ſovereign Hatred for it in others, without perceiving what ſhare they have of it themſelves. You muſt own that the wiſeſt, moſt polite part of the World, and moſt regular in Appearance, is a Set of Men in diſguiſe, who endeavour to impoſe one on another, not one of them daring to ſhew himſelf ſuch as he really is.

Philo. If you give the wiſeſt, and moſt regular Part of the World ſuch a Character; what will you ſay, *Eraſtus*, of the fooliſh diſorderly Part, and ſuch as are intirely devoted to their Paſſions?

Eraſtus. I will ſay, *Philo*, that the Diſtance between the wiſe and the fooliſh World, is in reality very inconſiderable. I can ſpeak by Experience, having been formerly an Actor in the wiſe World: Self-Love is the grand Spring, which equally puts both into motion. The only difference is, that in the wiſe

wiſe World, Self-Love has learnt the Art of diſguiſing itſelf, and dreſſing itſelf in all manner of colours, ſo as to paſs unknown. Gravity, Reſerve, an Air of Modeſty, Complaiſance, Generoſity, a Readineſs to do Services, an Air of Diſintereſtedneſs, and even of Freedom, are the ſeveral Colours, in which it finds its account. If any one chances to diſcover it under theſe Diſguiſes, it conceals itſelf in another manner; it declaims againſt itſelf, detects ſeveral of its own Artifices; and ridicules itſelf with ſo good a Grace, that nobody imagines this artful Paſſion is the Actor. This, *Philo*, is the ſide of the Medal, which gives us the Character of the wiſe World.

Philo. Pray let me ſee that which preſents the Character of the fooliſh World.

Eraſtus. Here it is, *Philo.* Self-Love is very coarſely cloath'd: It excites the Paſſions, without being at the trouble of diſguiſing them, or giving them fine Names. It boldly ſhews itſelf capricious, paſſionate, voluptuous, revengeful, and even impious; Avarice and Envy, are the only Vices it is not willing to own; and that not without ſome reaſon. To do the wiſe World juſtice, thoſe two excellent Qualities meet with much better Protection there than in the fooliſh World. Here now is the World maſked, and the World unmaſked; which of them is in your opinion the more valuable?

Philo. I ſhould be very much puzzled to anſwer that Queſtion.

Crito. Were I to give my Opinion, I ſhould allow the World unmaſked the preference; I own, it is not ſo agreeable for Society as the other; but, at leaſt, it deceives nobody. I find in the World maſked the Character of a Cheat, which I cannot bear.

Philo. You make a handſome Compliment to *Eraſtus*, who has own'd himſelf once an Actor in the wiſe World.

Eraſtus. Be not afraid of giving me Offence on that ſcore; had I not diſcover'd the Falſity and Knavery of it, I ſhould have continued to act there without knowing it.

Philo. Pray who has diſguſted you of it, *Eraſtus?*

Eraſtus. The very Maſter, I mention'd to you already.

Philo. What! Conſcience?

Eraſtus. The ſame, dear *Philo*; you ſeem ſurpriz'd at it.

Philo. I can hardly believe it.

Eraſtus. How! Can you not conceive that a Witneſs, who reſides within us, and follows us where-e'er we go, may eaſily unveil to us our moſt ſecret Intentions, if we will but give him the Hearing?

Philo. I begin to comprehend the matter.

Eraſtus. And that he may every moment give us the Lye, in regard to what we would appear to be, at the expence of Truth?

Philo. That is evident by experience.

Eraſtus.

Eraſtus. If he ſpeaks with ſo much Sincerity, even when we are afraid to hear him, how far will he lead us, when once we conſent to be directed by him?

Philo. How far do you think he can lead us, *Eraſtus?*

Eraſtus. Not only till he ſhews us within ourſelves a Fund of Falſehood, a perpetual Diſguiſe, a Deſire of paſſing for what we are not; but even till he lets us ſee the Foundation and Principle of our beſt Diſpoſitions, and fineſt Qualities, are no better than a moſt refined Self-Love, and a real Idolatry.

Crito. Well, *Philo*; had not I ſome reaſon to ſay juſt now, that a Man muſt have a great deal of Courage to give himſelf up to the Direction of *Eraſtus*'s Maſter?

Eraſtus. Pray tell me, *Philo*; is not the wiſe World eſſentially the ſame at full length, as it is in little?

Philo. I think ſo, *Eraſtus.*

Eraſtus. You will not therefore aſk me a ſecond time, how it is poſſible that the Witneſs in queſtion, or, if you pleaſe, Conſcience, can enable us to diſcover what the wiſe World is at full length. That queſtion is ſufficiently anſwer'd, by his enabling us to diſcover in ourſelves what it is in little.

Philo. I begin to underſtand how far Conſcience can lead us, provided we conſent to its Direction; and that by unveiling us to ourſelves, it likewiſe unveils others to us. But might it not be objected, that the Di-

verſity among Men is ſo great, that one can not judge of another. We ſee, for example, a great deal of difference between the ſeveral Actors of the wiſe World.

Eraſtus. If there be any Difference or Diverſity among them, as cannot be denied, it is only in Accidents and outward Forms, and not in the Subſtance or hidden Principle. While Man knows himſelf by the Form or Accidents only, he cannot by that means know other Men; becauſe they are in that reſpect very different one from another. But when Conſcience has brought him to know himſelf by the Subſtance and Principle, he then knows the Subſtance and Principle of thoſe of his own Claſs; and it is eaſy for him to diſcern them through their apparent Diverſity. You ſee now, *Philo*, why I advanced that Propoſition: *That the wiſe World is eſſentially at full length, what it is in little*; and that the Knowledge of the latter, as to its Eſſence, is ſufficient for giving us the Knowledge of the former.

Crito. You paſs in the World for a Merchant, *Eraſtus.*

Eraſtus. I pretend to nothing more, *Crito.*

Crito. I affirm, that you are more a Philoſopher than we, and that we have no right to the Title.

Eraſtus. What do you mean by being a Philoſopher?

Crito.

Crito. I mean, having what is expres'd by those Words written over the Gate of the Temple of *Delphos: Know thy Self.*

Eraſtus. If that is your Deſcription of the true Philoſopher, I own I wou'd fain be one.

Crito. Methinks, *Eraſtus*, you have already made a conſiderable Progreſs, and are an Honour to your Maſter. If you have had no other but Conſcience, he muſt be a great Philoſopher; and 'tis a Quality, which I did not know belong'd to him.

Philo. You ſee, *Crito*, a Man may make new Diſcoveries every day.

Crito. You will take me for a very groſs Philoſopher, ſhould I tell you it is time to think of the diſcovery of a Dinner. However, I venture to put you in mind of it, at the hazard of paſſing for what I really am: and it is one of the Maxims of this Maſter's Philoſophy, not to pretend to paſs for what one is not.

Eraſtus. If you follow his Maxims ſo exactly, even in the ſmalleſt Matters, *Crito*, you will make great progreſs in a little time. I am willing to be groſs too on thoſe Terms, and make no ſcruple of telling you it is Dinner-time.

DIALOGUE V.

PHILO, CRITO, and ERASTUS.

Crito. YOU come late, *Eraſtus*; has any body detain'd you?

Eraſtus. Yes, *Crito*, I have been detain'd by a Viſit, which I thought very long. Do you know that you were partly the Subject of the Converſation? Our Conferences begin to make a noiſe; People are curious to know on what our Diſcourſes turn; they fear I ſhall ſeduce you.....

Philo. Pray who is ſo charitable, as to intereſt himſelf ſo much, in what concerns us?

Eraſtus. It is *N*—— a Relation of *Crito*, one of the graveſt Actors in the wiſe World. He began with complementing me on my pretended Wiſdom; but yet profeſſed a great fear of *Pietiſm*, and the pernicious Sentiments to which it may carry a Man. I aſk'd him what he meant by *Pietiſm*, and whether he took the Term in the good or bad Senſe. That Queſtion puzzled him: He was not willing to own he had charged me, with being a Hypocrite or falſe *Devoté*; on the other hand he was apprehenſive, I ſhould aſk him why *Piety* was dangerous, and muſt neceſſarily lead a Man to pernicious Sentiments. He knew not how to get off. It happen'd luckily that ſomebody came in, who interrupted the Diſcourſe, and reliev'd us both; for I was perhaps as much in pain as he. It does

not

not become a young Man, like me, to puzzle so grave and distinguish'd a Man as *N*——. I am not malicious enough to divert myself at his expence.

Crito. You did not treat us so tenderly, *Eraſtus*; and I have obſerv'd you, more than once, laugh maliciouſly at the Confuſion you gave us.

Eraſtus. I did it without any Scruple: for beſides that the Quality of old Fellow-Collegians allows a certain Liberty, I conſider'd you as Perſons capable of making an advantage of ſuch Confuſions; and my Conjecture was well-grounded. But as to thoſe honeſt Gentlemen of *N*——'s Stamp, they only give them Pain without the leaſt Profit.

Crito. I have not yet told you, *Eraſtus*, that *N*—— attack'd me the other day on your account. He had been inform'd of our frequent Interviews, and was concerned to ſee me drawn into an Intimacy with one, who has the Character of Singularity. I had like to have burſt out into laughing at the mention of Singularity; and had a mind to tell him, that way of ſpeaking was fit only for old Women and Schoolmaſters, who have a veneration for every Syllable of their Catechiſm, as ſomewhat ſacred. But I commanded myſelf; and with good reaſon; for he wou'd have been non-plus'd, and, as you ſay, without knowing how to make his advantage of it. I only replied, with an Air of Raillery, that *Philo* and I ſhould perhaps have

better ſucceſs in converting *Eraſtus* from *Pietiſm* to Worldlineſs, than he in converting us from Worldlineſs to *Pietiſm*. He was beginning to wiſh Succeſs to our Enterprize, but his Prudence made him ſtop ſhort. He was ſenſible ſuch a Wiſh was neither ſuitable to his Rank nor Gravity; ſo that he only adviſ'd me to be on my guard againſt ſo dangerous a Friend.

Philo. Whither are you going in ſuch haſte, *Eraſtus?*

Eraſtus. I am leaving you as faſt as poſſible, that I may neither ſeduce nor be ſeduced.

Crito. Dear *Eraſtus*, be not ſo unlucky. You muſt own you do not much fear us; it wou'd be our buſineſs to fly. I am apprehenſive you have gone farther with us, than we can go with you; but I know not what to make of you, and have reaſon to ſuſpect you carry ſome magical Charm about you; for the more I propoſe to avoid you, the more impatient I am to meet you again.

Eraſtus. At that rate, I muſt be a piece of a Sorcerer; *Crito* diſcovers a Quality in me, with which I was entirely unacquainted. But let us not ſpeak too loud; if ſome good Woman ſhould over-hear us, I ſhould ſoon be ſentenced to the Stake.

Crito. Are you ſure, *Eraſtus*, that you are not, in ſeveral People's way of thinking, a more dangerous Man, than the Sorcerers who are burnt? or, if you pleaſe, were formerly burnt; for that Practice is now out faſhion.

Philo.

Philo. Is it allowable, *Crito*, to proceed to Invectives without Proofs? You will be obliged to make it appear preſently, how *Eraſtus* can paſs for ſo dangerous a Man.

Crito. I carry the Proofs within me, *Philo.* All the Sorcerers together could not have made the leaſt of thoſe Impreſſions, which the ſight of *Eraſtus* has produced in me.

Philo. But are thoſe Impreſſions ſo dangerous?

Crito. Very dangerous, *Philo*; as they tend to make a Man miſtruſt himſelf.

Eraſtus. That indeed is very dangerous; ſince in that ſituation a Man will not know whom to truſt. But are you in earneſt, *Philo?* Do you really begin to miſtruſt ſo good a Friend as *Self?* You was ſaying a little while ago, that you made all other Friends give place to him; but if Diffidence once creeps in there, I will not be anſwerable for the Conſequence.

Philo. Pray, tell me, *Crito*, wou'd you miſtruſt a Man, of whoſe Honeſty you are well aſſur'd?

Crito. No, certainly.

Philo. Are you diſhoneſt then, *Crito*, that you begin to miſtruſt yourſelf?

Crito. You will laugh at me, *Philo*, if I tell you I find I am not over-ſtock'd with Honeſty.

Eraſtus. Take care, *Crito*, you do not give us too bad an opinion of yourſelf. *Philo* may be ſcandalized at it. For my part, I

ſhall always be pleas'd to ſee you endeavour to paſs only for what you are. It is an Introduction to the Philoſophy, of which we were talking the other day.

Philo. But tell me, *Crito*, with whom have you dealt diſhoneſtly, and on what occaſions?

Crito. If I begin with acting ſo with myſelf, may I not treat others in the ſame manner?

Philo. I did not take you for ſuch a Man till now.

Crito. Nor I myſelf, *Philo*, till I came into company with *Eraſtus*. Judge now, whether I had not ſome reaſon for ſaying he might paſs for a dangerous Man, and much more ſo than a Sorcerer can be.

Eraſtus. I know not what I can have ſaid to you, *Crito*, that could make you doubt of your own Honeſty.

Crito. You have ſaid nothing to me on that Subject, *Eraſtus*.

Philo. Why then do you malicioufly charge him with it?

Eraſtus. Perhaps the magic Virtue, which I uſe, has produced that Effect, independent of the Converſation.

Crito. That is the caſe, *Eraſtus*; it is not your Arguments that have cured me of the good Opinion I entertain'd of myſelf. Had you attack'd me that way, I ſhould have had an Anſwer ready. It is a ſecret Impreſſion, a ſomething which I cannot name, from which

I would hide myſelf; but its Language is ſo true, that it is not in one's power to contradict it.

Philo. Has this ſomething diſcover'd a want of Sincerity or Integrity within you?

Crito. That is what it upbraids me with every moment; and I cannot deny the Juſtneſs of its Reproaches.

Philo. If it does you a good Office that way, it is unhappily to the prejudice of your Repoſe.

Crito. Moſt certainly, *Philo*; and it is no ſmall mortification to me, when I imagine myſelf very generous, to find an Intereſt concealed under an apparent Generoſity. This is only the fair ſide of me; were I to ſhew you ſome others, you would be very much ſurprized at them.

Eraſtus. *Philo* perhaps would; but I imagine I ſhould not.

Philo. Why that Diſtinction, *Eraſtus?*

Eraſtus. Becauſe I have diſcover'd in myſelf a Fund or Principle of Diſguiſe, Double-dealing, and refined Hypocriſy, which hinder my being ſurprized at what I may ſee in another. You have not forgot, *Philo*, the Picture I drew the other day of the wiſe World; it was my own, taken from the Original; I let you ſee plainly enough, that I had not learnt what the wiſe World is at full length, till my own Experience had taught me what it is in little.

Philo. I know not, *Eraſtus*, whether I am

to

to take your word for the ill you ſay of yourſelf. I imagined your Modeſty made me exaggerate in that manner, having always ſeen you very unlike what you call your own Picture.

Eraſtus. I ſhall take you at your word, *Philo.* Is appearing to the eyes of others, very different from what one really is, being ſincere or diſguiſed?

Philo. Diſguiſed, if I am not miſtaken.

Eraſtus. You have ſeen me, you ſay, very unlike the Picture I give for my own.

Philo. I ſhall always ſay ſo.

Eraſtus. Am not I more capable than another of judging, whether that Picture reſembles me or not; eſpecially when it repreſents me in an ugly Likeneſs?

Philo. I grant it, *Eraſtus.*

Eraſtus. Now I declare it is drawn to the Life; therefore, when you ſaw me entirely unlike it, you ſaw a Man in diſguiſe.

Philo. You force me, *Eraſtus*, to ſubſcribe to a thing which in the main I diſown, and I cannot believe that . . . . .

Eraſtus. Philo is reſolved, whatever comes of it, to judge charitably, as the Phraſe is; that is, never to believe what any one may ſay to his Neighbour's diſadvantage. But, methinks, when a Man ſpeaks of himſelf, his word may be taken.

Crito. Philo would anſwer, that Modeſty may induce a Man to ſpeak worſe of himſelf than he really deſerves.

Eraſtus.

Eraſtus. I have no pretenſion to that Modeſty, which induces a Man to ſpeak worſe of himſelf than he deſerves, *Crito*; I willingly leave that to the wiſe World, which it ſuits better than me. I am ſo far from it, that I am perſuaded my real Character always exceeds what I can ſay of myſelf in that way.

Philo. I do not ſee, *Eraſtus*, why Modeſty ſhould ſuit the wiſe World, as you have painted it.

Eraſtus. Yes, *Philo*; the Modeſty, of which we are ſpeaking, ſuits it perfectly well. If we take a near view of it, we ſhall ſee it at bottom no better than real Diſſimulation, the Art of appearing what one is not; a Vanity much more refined than that which prompts a Man to ſpeak well of himſelf; and that it proceeds only from Blindneſs, or a want of Acquaintance with one's ſelf.

Crito. You give a pretty good account of my Lady Modeſty, *Eraſtus.* You may run the hazard of drawing great numbers on your back, by this Liberty: ſo many Authors, modeſt in their Prefaces; ſo many Ladies, exceſſively modeſt in their Compliments; ſo many Candidates for Places and Employs, who know how to ſecure Votes by their Modeſty.

Eraſtus. What ſay you, *Philo?* Do not all thoſe ſeveral Parts belong to the wiſe World? And had not I good reaſon for leaving it in poſſeſſion of Modeſty, as an Annex to its Domain?

Philo.

Philo. I own, that Modeſty, when taken in this ſenſe, entirely belongs to it. But may not Modeſty be allowed its good Senſe, as well as *Pietiſm*, and ſuch a one as might make it ſuit good Men?

Eraſtus. If Modeſty ought to have a good Senſe, we muſt give it ſome other Name; in that ſenſe, I know of none proper for it, but thoſe of Truth, Sincerity, and Ingenuouſneſs, in ſhewing one's Deformities, as well as Beauties. This is the Modeſty that ſuits good Men. But, after all, as the World has entertain'd a quite contrary Idea of it, and as in that ſenſe it cannot ſuit good Men, they will willingly quit all Claim to it, in favour of the wiſe World, to which they alſo leave the Reputation of being modeſt, as an Appanage; contenting themſelves with the Reality, without having the Reputation of it.

Philo. It is eaſily conceived, that Modeſty, taken in the bad Senſe, is artful Vanity, and refined Diſſimulation. But I do not ſo eaſily underſtand what you added, that both proceed from Blindneſs, or a want of being acquainted with one's ſelf.

Eraſtus. Pray tell me, *Philo*, how would you call a Man, who ſhould accuſe himſelf of Faults, which he thinks he has not, and deny the good Qualities which he believes he has?

Philo. I am of opinion he might juſtly be called a Lyar, if things are to be diſtinguiſhed by their true Names.

Eraſtus.

Eraſtus. And how would you call a Man who ſhould ſpeak in that manner, with a deſign that his Neighbour ſhould think quite the contrary of what he ſays of himſelf?

Philo. A Hypocrite, or I am miſtaken.

Eraſtus. Should ſuch a Man play this part, in order to gain the Reputation of Modeſty, and thus facilitate his Promotion to ſome Poſt, or marry a Fortune, pray what Title would you give him?

Philo. That of a Cheat, in my opinion.

Eraſtus. Should any one undertake to ſhew this Man, that notwithſtanding his ſeeming Modeſty, he is at the bottom a Hypocrite, and a Cheat, how do you think he would be received?

Crito. Very roughly, perhaps, if our Man chanced to be . . . . .

Philo. Without puſhing Matters too far, one may judge he would complain he was highly injured, and that he bore no Reſemblance to the Picture.

Eraſtus. That would be a proof that he knew not himſelf, but was abſolutely blind as to the Reality of his own Diſpoſitions.

Philo. That admits of no Reply.

Eraſtus. Well then, *Philo*, you will not aſk me again, how a Modeſty that induces a Man to ſpeak worſe of himſelf, than he deſerves, or thinks he deſerves, can be the reſult of Blindneſs, or of a want of knowing himſelf.

Philo. I am entirely of your mind, in that Point, *Eraſtus.*

Eraſtus.

Eraſtus. Since we are all agreed, let us walk to Town; it is very cloudy, and we may be well waſhed in a Quarter of an Hour.

DIALOGUE VI.

CRITO, PHILO, and ERASTUS.

Crito. BEFORE you came, *Eraſtus*, *Philo* and I were employed in wrangling.

Philo. Crito is the Aggreſſor to-day; he began to attack me on a Piece of Raillery of yours, as he calls it, about judging charitably. He has maintained, that your Deſign was to ridicule the vulgar Opinion, concerning charitable Judgments.

Eraſtus. In reality I had it a little in view. That Opinion miſleads ſo many, even good Men, that it were to be wiſhed, what is true in it was diſtinguiſhed from what is falſe.

Crito. I know ſome, who are extremely well pleaſed with themſelves, for judging charitably of all the World, and think themſelves obliged to have a good opinion of every Man in particular.

Eraſtus. At that rate, the caſe will be the ſame in regard to Charity as Modeſty; both of them will be grounded on Falſhood: a Man muſt be blind, in order to be charitable; and a Diſſembler, in order to be modeſt. A fine Notion of Charity and Modeſty!

Crito.

Crito. To look at them in that Point of View, nothing appears ſo ridiculous: I very much doubt whether the wiſe World, which realizes the Idea of them ſo well in Practice, is able to maintain it in Speculation. Here again the fooliſh World has the advantage over the wiſe World. If it is neither really charitable nor modeſt, at leaſt it makes no profeſſion of being ſo: there is leſs Contrariety between what it practiſes, and what it profeſſes.

Philo. There is not one Actor in the wiſe World, who would adopt the Idea of Charity and Modeſty, eſtabliſhed on Falſhood; they would all heartily reject it.

Eraſtus. I know that, dear *Philo*, by my own Experience. Had any Man offer'd it me in that manner, when I acted a Part there, I ſhould certainly have laughed at him. Nor is it leſs true, that I was not then either really charitable or modeſt, and that I deſire however to paſs for ſuch. A Suſpicion of the contrary would have touched me to the quick. What think you, *Philo*, is not this being a Hypocrite and Diſſembler? You could not believe me the other day, when I threw thoſe fine Qualities into my Picture; but attributed it to my Modeſty. You will now be undeceived in that Point, and will, no doubt, take it for granted, that the Queſtion between us is not concerning Modeſty, but Sincerity and Truth.

Philo.

Philo. I do not underſtand you, *Eraſtus.* I never in my life heard a Man talk ſo ſincerely. I have met with ſeveral, who readily accuſed themſelves of being haſty and paſſionate, or lazy and indolent; but to ſuſpect them of being void of Charity and Sincerity, would have vex'd them to the ſoul.

Crito. Might I take the liberty, I ſhould ſay I ſuſpect *Eraſtus* of an amicable Fraud.

Eraſtus. I beg you will explain yourſelf, *Crito.*

Crito. My Suſpicion is this; that when *Eraſtus* pretended to draw his own Picture, he deſigned to draw mine, and ſpare me the Confuſion of doing it myſelf. He, without doubt, obſerved I had a mind to begin, without having Courage enough to proceed; and that I miſcarried at the firſt ſtroke, which produced only a confuſed Draught of apparent Generoſity. If that be the Caſe, I am heartily obliged to him for the Favour.

Eraſtus. No, dear *Crito*; I had no Thoughts of you, when I drew my Picture. I thought Truth and Juſtice required that Confeſſion from me, as a ſort of Reparation of my former Diſguiſes. Sooner or later we muſt come to this Reſolution. Truth will loſe none of its Rights; what we defraud it of in this Life, muſt be reſtored in the other, with inexpreſſible Confuſion.

Crito. That is an important Truth.

Eraſtus. By a Senſe of this Truth, we diveſt ourſelves of Falſehood, and the Appear-

ances

ances of Religion, and dare appear as imperfect as we really are, and as Truth will one day ſhew us to be.

Crito. What you ſaid the other day, *Eraſtus*, is certainly true; that, in order to know thoroughly what the World is at full length, it is ſufficient to know in the ſame manner what it is in little.

Eraſtus. I now call to mind what we were ſaying a few Moments ſince, concerning charitable Judgments; they are made to conſiſt in judging of others, as we would have them judge of us, were we in their place.

Philo. Do you think that would be juſt, *Eraſtus?*

Eraſtus. Very juſt, without doubt. One Condition only is requiſite in this Caſe; which is, to know whether the Perſon to be judged would conſent to be known to the bottom, and that another ſhould judge of him only by what he is; or whether, on the contrary, he deſires to be judged favourably, to the prejudice of Truth.

Crito. Here I muſt do myſelf Juſtice. Till this time, had I been to make the Choice, I ſhould certainly have choſen the latter. I do not know, *Eraſtus*, whether you have me always in view or not: But you deſcribe me very well in the Character laſt mentioned.

Eraſtus. Without having you in view, *Crito*, I may often hit on your Character, by reaſon of the Conformity of my own Experience with yours.

Philo.

Philo. Crito has interrupted us, *Eraſtus.* Let us know what you drive at.

Eraſtus. I ſay, that if the Maxim of judging others as we would be judged, is juſt and equitable, it ought to be obſerved by ſuch as are juſt and equitable. What ſay you to that, *Philo?*

Philo. I think that, as you ſay, in order to judge equitably, a Man ſhould be equitable himſelf.

Eraſtus. Do you think a Man of Equity, if he was blind, for example, would require others to judge he has fine Eyes?

Philo. That would be a pleaſant Fancy indeed.

Eraſtus. But how many, who are blind in regard to Religion and themſelves, would paſs for clear-ſighted Perſons!

Crito. There is no need of going farther than me, to find one of this kind.

Eraſtus. The advantage you have over them, *Crito*, is, that you know yourſelf in that point.

Philo. Crito will tire out my Patience with his Practice of interrupting. I would fain hear *Eraſtus*'s Concluſions.

Eraſtus. The Concluſion is, that in order to ſet things in a clearer light, we ought to ſpeak, not of judging charitably, but of judging equitably. Not that in reality Charity can be contrary to Equity; but it is ſo in the vulgar Opinion, which requires a Man to blind himſelf, in order to judge charitably.

Philo.

Philo. That Diſtinction, I confeſs, is proper for ſolving the Difficulty.

Eraſtus. If I am a Man of Equity, for example, I would have others judge of me only by what I am, or by what they may know of me. For the ſame reaſon, I will judge of others only by what they are, or by what I evidently know of them.

Philo. That is equitable.

Eraſtus. In all doubtful Particulars or Circumſtances, I will judge only by Probabilities or Poſſibilities, and ſuſpend my Judgment, without giving myſelf the trouble of juſtifying or condemning.

Philo. This would be acting judiciouſly, and keeping out of the danger of being deceived.

Crito. To know how to ſuſpend one's Judgment is an admirable Secret; but I think nothing ſo difficult.

Eraſtus. The Philoſophers pretend to be Maſters of it; I know not whether they really are or not.

Crito. I believe, that in that, as in other things, they know but little of themſelves. I can ſpeak by Experience.

Philo. Is it not too raſh to judge of others by one's ſelf, *Crito?*

Crito. I except ſuch as have taken Philoſophy by the right end, and enter'd on it with the Practice of that Admonition, *Know thyſelf.* Do I wrong thoſe who have not enter'd in this manner, when I ſay they know not

themſelves? This is juſt as if a Man ſhould find fault with me, for ſaying the *Africans* are not white.

Eraſtus. Methinks the Sun ſhines hot enough here to make us *Africans.* I am for ſeeking ſome ſhady Place; and believe we ſhall be better accommodated in the Houſe, than any where elſe.

DIALOGUE VII.

CRITO, PHILO, and ERASTUS.

Philo. WE are here very early. I doubt *Eraſtus* is not come before us.

Crito. Your Doubt will ſoon be removed, if that is he whom I ſee under that Tree.

Philo. If it is not *Eraſtus*, it is one very like him; we ſhall ſoon be ſatisfied as to that point.

Crito. Methinks, *Philo*, theſe Walks will loſe at leaſt three parts in four of their Beauty, when *Eraſtus* leaves us.

Philo. Doth he talk of going? I ſhall be extremely ſorry to part with him, though we muſt be reſign'd, ſince we cannot keep him.

Crito. He talks of ſetting out in leſs than a Fortnight; I hope we ſhall prevail with him to ſtay three Weeks; and even that is but a ſhort time.

Philo. Now I ſee him very plainly. It is he; he riſes, and is coming towards us.

Crito. Dear *Eraſtus*, we muſt own ourſelves very much to blame for diſturbing your profound Reverie.

Eraſtus.

Eraſtus. I may hereafter have time enough for my Reveries, but ſhall not always have the pleaſure of converſing with *Crito* and *Philo*.

Philo. We were talking of a piece of ill News, *Eraſtus*; we were upon your Journey; and I could not pardon your Thoughts of leaving your Friends ſo ſoon.

Eraſtus. Let us not talk of that, I beſeech you, *Philo*; it is a thing not yet ready for execution; we ſhall have an Opportunity of ſeeing one another ſeveral times before I go.

Crito. Perhaps, *Eraſtus*, you deſign to give us the ſlip, when we leaſt think of it; but we ſhall prevent that, by having a watchful Eye over you.

Eraſtus. Do you know I have another Journey to take before I leave you for good and all?

Crito. I gueſs that Journey is to the Country Seat of *N*—— your Relation. Though it were but for a few days, *Eraſtus*, it would be ſo much time ſtolen from us.

Eraſtus. He would have made me promiſe to ſpend eight Days with him, but I engaged only for four. Beſides, I believe *N*—— would not oppoſe me, if I ſhould invite you thither, during my ſtay at his Houſe.

Philo. Nor ſhall we oppoſe the Motion, *Eraſtus*; the Bargain is made, though I am not ſo particularly acquainted with *N*—— as *Crito* is.

Crito. You will not guess, *Erastus*, what Question I was ask'd yesterday about you. I was in company with *Fortunatus*, a young Gentleman, to whom I communicated your Definition of the wise World and the foolish World. He immediately declared himself a Member of the latter, and in that did himself justice. While we were thus employed, *Parmenas* came in, and desired to know the Subject of our Discourse. We told him: he was struck dumb; but could not step into the Class that was proper for him, as *Fortunatus* had done. The rest of the Company, however, placed him there; one half quarter of an Hour's Conversation with him was sufficient for concluding him an Actor in the wise World. He took some notice of it, and was uneasy. Being thus embaras's'd, he took it in his head to ask me to what World you belong'd, since you would not range yourself in either Class. I told him I had not yet required you to explain yourself on that Subject. No doubt, says he, *Erastus* places himself in the devout or pious World. Not so neither, said I; and then gave him the good and bad Sense of those Terms. To what World can he belong then? asked my Gentleman, with some warmth. Perhaps, replied I, smiling, he is a Man of the other World. In fine, to put an end to the Dispute, I promised I would get an Answer to his Question from your own Mouth.

Erastus.

Eraſtus. The Title of a Man of the other World is too good for one, who, like me, is ſtill much attached to this.

Crito. To what World ſhall I ſay you belong then, dear *Eraſtus?*

Eraſtus. I am a Man lately eſcaped from the wiſe World, and who endeavours to keep at a diſtance from it, in order to make my way to the ſincere World.

Philo. How, *Eraſtus!* have you not long been in the Claſs of ſincere Men?

Eraſtus. That is what I aim at, dear *Philo*; and that is the Tendency of all the Leſſons I receive from the Maſter, whom we ſpoke of. But I muſt tell you, he gives me Ideas of Sincerity very different from thoſe I once entertain'd of it. I ſhould have imagined myſelf a Phenix in point of Sincerity, had I always ſpoken exactly what I thought, without Diminution or Exaggeration. This would have been a conſiderable Point gained; but entire Sincerity goes much farther. It is not confined to acting ſincerely with one's Neighbour; its chief Tendency is to make us deal ſo with ourſelves.

Philo. How much were it to be wiſhed we could meet with great Numbers truly ſincere in the firſt reſpect! Are not you too hard to pleaſe, *Eraſtus*, in not being ſatisfied with that, but aſpiring at ſomething more? For my part, I confeſs ingenuouſly, I have no clear Idea of what you call dealing ſincerely with one's ſelf.

Crito. I own, *Philo*, I do conceive some Idea of it; but it is from my Experience of the contrary. I catch myself every Moment; and it is what I the other day call'd not acting honestly with one's self.

Eraſtus. Nothing is more hard to define than Sincerity with one's self; it must be learnt by Experience. It is so nice a Point, that without a very tender Conscience, it is impossible to explain it. Conscience becomes tender in proportion as it is obey'd. The more we listen to it, the more distinctly it speaks. It is invariably on the side of Truth, and discovers a Falshood in us, of which we should never have thought ourselves capable; but all this is not done without our full Consent.

Crito. I perceive I do not deal sincerely with myself, for example, when I have a glimpse of some Truth, that condemns me, and would carry me farther than I am willing to go; I very well know how to turn my Eyes from it, and set my Mind at ease by Arguments that justify my Conduct.

Eraſtus. Have you but lately discovered in yourself an Aversion to Truth, *Crito?*

Crito. Not till your Arrival, *Eraſtus.*

Eraſtus. Was you in a more happy Situation in that respect before?

Crito. I cannot tell, *Eraſtus.* But the truth is, I did not discover in myself any Falshood, or Opposition to Truth. I did not even imagine I resisted it; and should any one have charged me with so doing, he would have

have touched me to the quick. Now I want no Accuſer in that Particular but myſelf.

Eraſtus. I ſhould think, *Crito*, that your Experience of reſiſting Truth, is a Proof that it makes ſome progreſs in you.

Crito. How can that be, *Eraſtus?* Doth not ſuch a reſiſtance oppoſe the progreſs Truth might make? I do not underſtand you, unleſs you explain yourſelf better.

Eraſtus. It is true, did Truth meet with no Oppoſition in the Heart, it would make a much quicker Progreſs. I ſpoke thus by way of Compariſon with your former Diſpoſition; and my Meaning was, that when you perceived no reſiſtance within you in regard to Truth, it was Proof that you was not vigorouſly attack'd by it; and that you had, perhaps, placed ſo many Barriers between it and yourſelf, that it could be heard only at a great diſtance.

Crito. Now I comprehend you, *Eraſtus.* You let me ſee that thoſe, who imagine they make no reſiſtance to Truth, are at the greateſt diſtance from it, or directly turn their backs on it.

Philo. It muſt be own'd that Conſcience is but little known in the World, though every one pretends to have one.

Crito. Nothing is ſo much talk'd of. A Man without Conſcience, or who ſhould paſs for ſuch, would be deteſted by all Mankind, whatever other Qualifications he might be ſuppoſed poſſeſs'd of.

Eraſtus. I am perſuaded every Man has a Conſcience; but aſk each Man in particular, of what ſervice it is to him, and what uſe he makes of it, and he will be puzzled for an Anſwer. Is not the Reply we find in one of *Eſop*'s Fables, applicable on this Occaſion? He is ſpeaking of a Man, who hid a Treaſure in the Earth, without making any other Uſe of it; upon which, another ſays to him, put a Stone in its room, it will be full as valuable to you.

Crito. Among what we call honeſt Men, there are ſeveral, who, wou'd they but ſpeak the Truth, might ſay they make no more uſe of their Conſcience, than if they had none.

Eraſtus. In that point, they religiouſly obſerve St. *Paul*'s Advice concerning Riches, and all Things of this World.

Philo. But yet are there not ſeveral, whoſe Conſcience prevents their falling into great Diſorders?

Eraſtus. There are indeed great Numbers, who forbear giving into groſs Diſorders; but it is a queſtion, whether that Effect is always produc'd by Conſcience. Self-Love is a very perſuaſive Caſuiſt; eſpecially when it has to do with honeſt Men, it has good Reaſons to offer them, with which they are eaſily ſatisfied. It ſhews them the damage they wou'd do themſelves in the World, the Contempt into which they wou'd fall, if they indulged themſelves in ſuch Exceſſes, as are fit only

for

for the Dregs of the People. These are weighty Reasons, to which they are obliged to yield. Besides, this good Casuist is complaisant: he permits his Devotees to make themselves amends for the Pleasures, which he prohibits, with others incomparably more refined and engaging.

Crito. I find there is not much difference between Self-Love's Devotees, and the Actors of the wise World. May it not be said, that among such People, Conscience has fewer Voices in the Chapter, than it has among the Actors of the foolish World?

Eraſtus. You have hit the Nail on the head, *Crito*; and it is no hard matter to guess the Reason. Self-Love, which governs them both, is in the wise World a grave and rational Casuist, that persuades with weighty Reasons; whereas in the foolish World, it is an extravagant, passionate and unreserved Counsellor; who may make what noise he pleases to hinder Conscience from being heard, the least of its Motions is always consider'd as a Testimony of Truth; if it is not follow'd or obey'd, it is at least feared and respected; Men have no Reasons to offer against it. The Counsellor in question is not so well provided this way. In the wise World the Case is different. If Conscience attempts to speak, as its Language is very simple and concise, and its Decisions are most commonly given as quick as Lightening, it has soon finish'd what it has to say.

Then in ſteps the Caſuiſt, with a croud of demonſtrative Reaſons againſt what Conſcience has pronounced; while it leaves him in ſole poſſeſſion of the Argument, and lets him talk as long as he pleaſes. Thence it is concluded, that it owns itſelf conquer'd, and that it is a fine thing to have to do with able and ſkilful People.

Crito. Dear *Eraſtus*, you have given a deſcription of what has paſſed within me ten thouſand times.

Philo. I find *Crito* becomes more learned every day, in the Philoſophy we were lately talking of; we ſhall ſoon be able to call him a Man eſcaped from the wiſe World. It is plain he is in no good humour with it, and falls on it at every turn.

Crito. You will inſpire me with Emulation, *Philo*; I would fain prove your Words true. I am ſenſible, however, that there is a wide difference between knowing the wiſe World for what it is, and really making one's eſcape from it.

Eraſtus. You will always be more and more ſenſible of that, *Crito.* But do we not forget ourſelves? I believe it is time to retire; and I fear I have already made a Friend wait, with whom I am to dine.

Crito. Shall we not ſee you again, *Eraſtus*, before you go into the Country?

Eraſtus. I believe not, *Crito*, for I muſt go to-morrow morning. But I depend on ſeeing you in the Country, and expect you will keep your Word.

LET-

LETTER I.

From CRITO *to* ERASTUS.

IT is not my fault, dear *Erastus*, that I have not been so good as my Word. I design'd to have seen you yesterday with *Philo*; but was detain'd in Town by some unlucky Accidents, which it wou'd be tiresome to relate. I wou'd have engaged him to go alone; but he chose rather to stay for me.

To console ourselves under this delay, we walk'd towards the Evening in our usual Place of Rendezvous. I will not let you know how melancholy it appear'd without you. I had better tell you we stood in great need of such a Friend as *Erastus*, to set us right. We fell into a dispute, which was occasion'd by the Subject of our last Conversation.

The Question turn'd on the Language of Conscience, and the manner in which you told us it expresses itself, in Flashes as quick as Lightening. *Philo* wou'd not allow this Language to be always that of Truth. He maintain'd that the Decisions of Conscience ought to be examin'd and corrected by Reasoning. He grounded what he said on that universally receiv'd Maxim, *That every Man is obliged to enlighten his Conscience.* To which he added, the Difficulties usually started on this Article; that Pagans, Mahometans, and superstitious Christians, believe they obey

their Conscience in the false Worship they give the Deity: That even the most merciless Persecutors pretend their Conscience justifies them in their Cruelties: In short, that we see good Men, and Persons of Sense at the same time, giving into all sorts of Puerilities, and becoming Fanatics, when they blindly give themselves up to all they imagine Conscience requires at their hands.

It wou'd be tedious to tell you what Reply I made: thus much is certain, I did not acquit myself well of the Task, and *Philo* went away delighted with his Advantage over me. I threaten'd him that he should not come off so well another time; that I wou'd send you an Account of our Dispute, and engage you to answer for me. He seem'd to consent readily to the Proposal: I am now as good as my Word; he is in my Room while I am writing; and I shall let him see my Letter, that he may judge, whether my Charge against him is just or not. He may look as big as he pleases; but I am assur'd he already repents of giving his Consent. I shall spare myself the trouble of concluding with an *I am*, &c. and you that of reading it. I desire you will do the same, and believe it will be not less to your mind than to mine.

LET-

LETTER I.

From ERASTUS *in the Country to* CRITO.

DO you think it fair, dear *Crito*, to engage one's Friends without their Consent? At your rate of talking, one would imagine me a Divine, and oblig'd to answer all Objections that can be brought against a particular System.

By your leave, I do not take that to be my case; for, besides that I am no Divine, I do not positively embrace any System, so as to set up for defending it. You will tell me, perhaps, that I adopt the System of Conscience; I do indeed adopt it, if it may be allow'd that Title. But there is a great deal of difference between relishing a Truth one's self, and engaging to maintain it against all possible Attacks.

Philo may remember that when he ask'd me, in one of our first Conversations, for a Definition of Conscience, I answer'd him, that I had not skill enough for that; that I left the task for the Divines; and that for my part I could say nothing of it, but what I had learnt by Experience.

The Objections drawn up in your Letter against the way of Conscience are not new to me. I myself for a long time form'd a terrible Notion of the Rocks on which that way might cast me; at present I cannot sufficient-

ly admire the Contradiction I obſerve in the Language of the generality of Mankind; eſpecially in the Claſs of the wiſe World, where Men profeſs to ſet a great value on Conſcience, to have a ſupreme Contempt for a Man who has none, or wilfully acts againſt its Dictates; and wou'd conſider him as a Perſon void of Honeſty and Sincerity. Who cou'd depend on him in any thing? By this Idea, of which every one makes profeſſion, Men pay homage to Conſcience, attribute to it what is moſt excellent and valuable among Mankind, and own that without it, nothing wou'd be valuable or excellent.

On the other hand, the worſt of Vices are aſcribed to it, ſuch as Idolatry, Superſtition, Fanaticiſm, and the Spirit of Perſecution. Thus it is ſoon degraded from its former Rank; on this foot it muſt be upright and falſe at the ſame time; the Source of the greateſt Good, and the Source of the greateſt Evil; in a word, ſweet and bitter Waters muſt flow from the ſame Spring.

I heartily wiſh, my dear Friend *Crito*, and thoſe, whoſe Cauſe he pleads, wou'd teach me how to reconcile two things ſo directly oppoſite. In the mean time, I ſhall decline writing on a Subject which ſeems to me too ſerious for the Country, at leaſt if it muſt be handled gravely, as *Philo* and *Crito* propoſe.

You ſee, my dear Friend, you are miſtaken in the Choice of your Man for ſetting you right. Beſide that I am but a poor Writer,

Writer, the Country invites me rather to think than write. You expect, perhaps, that I should communicate my Reveries to you, and tell you how I pass my time here; but not a word of that, except you come and share the Pleasure with me. Besides, to tell you the truth, I should think half an hour ill employ'd in giving you the Particulars. A Company of little Musicians perch'd on the top of the Trees, have waited for me this quarter of an hour; they love to sing in the Cool of the Day, we hear but little of them when the Sun shines hot. Judge now, dear *Crito*, if I can stay in the House, and spend one Moment in writing.

LETTER II.

From CRITO *to* ERASTUS.

I Perceive, dear *Erastus*, that I must surmount all imaginable Difficulties to come to you; without that, the Quarrel between *Philo* and me, cannot be ended. You design'd to mortify me by not sending a direct Answer to *Philo*'s Objections, as I took upon me to promise you wou'd. My Disappointment has prov'd no small Comfort to him. He expected to be soundly paid off: the bare shortness of your Letter reviv'd him, before he knew the Contents of it. I observed, however, that he was gravel'd at two or three Passages.

He

He made a point of Honour of adopting all that can be offer'd in favour of Conſcience, and knew not how to reconcile it with what he had advanc'd to its diſadvantage. In ſhort, he was forc'd to own he had made ſuch Objections, with a view of ſpeaking the Language of ſeveral People, and giving you an opportunity of anſwering it, rather than with deſign of expreſſing his own Ideas. I perceived that, if there was ſome Truth in what he ſaid; it was at the ſame time a ſort of Evaſion. I let him know as much, which was not very agreeable to him. You ſee then, dear *Eraſtus*, that our difference will ſtill ſubſiſt, 'till you reconcile us. In fine, we are reſolv'd to ſee you to-morrow, and perhaps early enough in the Morning to hear your little Muſicians. It is to be hoped that Harmony will have ſome effect on our Minds, and in ſome meaſure diſpoſe us to ſing the ſame Tune.

LETTER II.

From ERASTUS *to* CRITO.

I Was not a little vexed, when I wak'd this Morning, and heard it rain violently. Did not you ſympathize with me, dear *Crito?* I was willing to flatter myſelf for above an Hour that the Rain would give over, and that I might yet enjoy the Company of my Friends. But it has begun again, and I muſt loſe all hopes for to-day at leaſt; for I depend

on

on its allowing us ſome quarter to-morrow, and hope I ſhall ſee you here very early. In the mean while, I muſt be reſign'd to be a Priſoner all day; which is no ſmall mortification to me. I ſhould make but a bad figure in the Country, were I obliged to keep my Room; and in that particular, I muſt confeſs I am a poor Philoſopher.

I have been reading over your two Letters. The Diverſions of the Place, and the Objects with which it preſents me, had made me forget the Subject of the firſt. That is not the caſe at preſent. The Turns I have taken in my Chamber, are ſo far from defacing *Philo*'s Objections about Conſcience out of my Mind, that they preſent them freſher to my Memory; and I have been ſo importun'd by them, that I have taken up my Pen, to write what occurs to me, and clear my hands of the Subject, if I can.

The Difficulties in queſtion, at firſt appeared to me very conſiderable, and much more ſo on the Receipt of your Letter. I know not but the Cloudineſs of the Weather has helped to diffuſe ſome Obſcurity on my Ideas; but I ſee Things very confuſedly, and what the other day ſeem'd very eaſily demoliſhed, appeared to me like a Mountain to-day.

I really thought that ſuch as had committed the greateſt Errors in point of Religion, make uſe of the pretext of Conſcience, and value themſelves on obeying its Motions.

What

What is Conscience then? said I, within myself. Doth it stand in need of being enlighten'd and corrected, as *Philo* supposes, according to the universally receiv'd Maxim?

By what Rule must it be corrected? To do this, we must find a Rule infallibly right, and incapable of varying; if we are not provided with such a Rule, we must still have recourse to another more right and invariable for correcting this; and so on *ad infinitum*, till we meet with the infallible Rule, or the Rule of Rules, by which all is to be corrected.

Where then shall we find this invariable Rule? Shall it be Reasoning, as so many maintain? But is there any necessity of proving that nothing in the World is so variable as Reasoning? Why must one way of Reasoning be rectified by another, that by a third, and so on *ad infinitum*, without our ever coming to one, that will not admit of Correction? Why, among a thousand Persons who understand Reasoning, do we not find four who entirely agree?

Every one charges his Antagonist's Reasoning with falsity; if Reasoning ought to serve for the Rule, there must be, in this multitude of opposite Reasonings, an Infinity of false Rules, which do not deserve that Appellation, because a Rule is a Rule only as it is one and right.

Where then is this invariable Rule? said I to myself. Is it Conscience? But is not that accus'd of being subject to still more Variations.

tions than Reasoning? Do not the different Sects or Religions, in which every Man thinks he has Conscience on his side, give us room to judge that it doth not every where speak the same Language?

Here now are Variations on all sides. Is there no certainty for Man, and must he necessarily fall into Falshood, even while he is obeying his Conscience? At that rate, no Man would be culpable, or have any occasion to reproach himself with a Crime. Disobedience to Conscience wou'd be a thing indifferent, as it wou'd not be a safer Guide than Reasoning. If Conscience is not better qualified for commanding Respect than Reasoning, if the former has no Superiority over the latter, of what use will it be? Shall it be its Business to go hand in hand with Reasoning, and command with equal Authority? Here is a Conflict of Jurisdiction; if the Orders of one are contrary to those of the other, and their Authority equal, which must be obey'd, and who shall judge?

But, by way of expedient, Conscience shall have the pre-eminence, and speak first. Reasoning will then step in to examine and rectify her Decisions; that is, Conscience will have the Pre-eminence in Name, and Reasoning in Reality. Conscience will be in the condition of a Prince during his Minority, who bears the Title of Sovereignty, while in what regards the Government of the State, he is consider'd as a Cipher, and all the Subjects know

know the Regent governs, and not the Prince. What will be the conſequence of this? Reaſoning will not only be above Conſcience, but will rule alone, becauſe no Order given by Conſcience can paſs, without being examined and corrected by Reaſon.

Thus Conſcience becomes uſeleſs in the World, ſince Men have found out the Art of aſſigning it a Governour. It muſt have relapſed into a State of Infancy, and given Proofs of Weakneſs, before Men can go this length. But have they a full right to conſider it always, as weak both in themſelves and others? In this laſt reſpect, there are a hundred Caſes in which they wou'd be very much diſpleaſed it ſhould paſs for ſuch. Is any Affair of Intereſt in queſtion, where they find themſelves injured, the Governour, or Reaſoning may take what pains he pleaſes to make the contrary appear; he will ſtill be liable to exception: Men will appeal to the definitive Judgment of Conſcience, without allowing the Governour any Redreſs. They are willing Conſcience ſhould judge alone in him who injures another; and are convinced that if he liſtens to it, he will be condemn'd without being able to gain a ſecond Hearing.

Why do we gueſs ſo exactly what will be the Deciſions of Conſcience in another? Why do we appeal to that of an Enemy, how unjuſt ſoever he may be, with an abſolute Aſſurance that it will condemn him if he liſtens to it? Were the Conſcience of a Perſon who acts

acts thus in his own power, were he Master of it, as he is of Reasoning, would it give Judgment against him? Wou'd he not oblige it to speak as he pleased?

In this respect, Conscience ceases to be weak in the Judgment of all Mankind. They not only set it above Reasoning, but are desirous that all Men should consult it alone in regard to their way of acting with them, particularly where Interest is concern'd. Here they grow diffident of the most specious Reasonings; and charge them with being false and deceitful. They declare that they appeal to every Man's own Conscience; and are ready to submit to its Judgment.

This is a proof that Men respect Conscience in general, though they set no value on it in particular. They are sensible what advantage they can make of that of others; but sit down contented with not knowing to what purpose they have one of their own. On the other hand, every one will do his best to make an advantage of his Neighbour's Conscience in what suits his own Conveniency. This is the way to hinder it from being entirely useless; this is a stroke of Art.

But do we not find this same Art miscarry in regard to ourselves? Are there not certain Times and Circumstances, in which Conscience exerts its Authority over Reasoning, and obliges it to be silent? Danger of Shipwreck, for example, or the view of approaching Death, are sufficient to convince us that the

the Teſtimony of Conſcience cannot be reform'd by Reaſon, how refined ſoever it may be ſuppoſed; and that it dares not attempt to diſprove Conſcience in what it pronounces, when awaken'd by the approach of Eternity.

It muſt be own'd that Conſcience plays very different Parts among Men. Sometimes it ſtands in need of Reformation; at others, it acts the Reformer. It always ſpeaks Truth in others, when it condemns them for an Injury done us; but may miſtake in us; when it pronounces ſome Accuſation againſt us, it muſt be rectified by Reaſoning. Here now are very contrary Parts.

But is it, properly ſpeaking, Conſcience that plays them, and not rather Men who play them in what regards Conſcience? Is not Light invariably the ſame, though it produces contrary Effects, as the Eye is well or ill diſpoſed?

If the Eye happens to be afflicted with a Cataract, do Men ſay Light muſt be cleared, that the Eye may ſee? Is it not immediately thought, the Eye muſt be rectified, as containing all the Obſtacles to the Refraction of Light?

Theſe, dear *Crito*, are part of the looſe *Reveries*, which the reading of your Letters, and a Walk in my Chamber, have produced. If they afford you any Entertainment, you muſt thank the Rain, and my Mortification at being confin'd while in the Country; I ſhould not otherwiſe have been able to come to a reſolution

resolution of committing them to writing. I could say a great deal more on the Subject; but shall take care not to send you my Thoughts. You must come yourself, if you desire to have my *Reveries* more at large. An excellent Inducement for Friends to take a Walk!

Our dear Friend *Philo* will see in the mean time what weight ought to be allowed that Maxim, which he says is universally received, *That Conscience stands in need of being enlightened*, and that its Decisions ought to be examined and corrected by Reasoning.

Good-night, my dear Friend. As the Weather begins to clear up, I hope I shall be a good Astronomer, and that it will be fair to-morrow. I wish I may have as good skill in Astrology, when I foretel that I shall see you here. It will be your fault if I do not pass for such, and receive the addition of that Title to the Character of Magician, which you have already bestowed on me.

LETTER III.

From CRITO *to* ERASTUS.

YOU shall not set up for an Astrologer, dear *Erastus*, since it has not been in our power to see you to-day, though our Inclination was good. As for the Character of Magician, *Philo* says there is no disputing it with you, since your Letter of yesterday. He maintains, there must be some Magic in your

your way of thinking; otherwiſe you could never have overthrown the univerſally received Maxim as you do. With this Perſuaſion he endeavours to conſole himſelf under his being worſted, as I had told him he muſt expect. However, he ſtill pretends to look big on your not having gone through with the Difficulties he had propoſed to you. But I foreſee he will be entirely routed. If nothing but a rainy Day was neceſſary for giving me that Pleaſure, (without offence) I could wiſh for it with all my heart. I am too much obliged to the Weather yeſterday, not to prefer my own Satisfaction in that Point to yours. You ſee, *Eraſtus*, that Diſintereſtedneſs gains ground in me. If that is not my caſe, you will, at leaſt, be ſomewhat pleaſed with me for appearing ſuch as I am, according to your favourite Maxim.

LETTER III.

From ERASTUS *to* CRITO.

I Perceive, dear *Crito*, you are endeavouring to put me in a paſſion in good earneſt. You are loading me with Affronts, by being worſe than your Word, and wiſhing me a hearty Rain, and that in ſuch a manner, that it may fall opportunely. You muſt be a good Aſtrologer yourſelf, ſince your Wiſhes prove ſo many Predictions; and I am thus reduced to the Neceſſity of writing againſt my will, in order to clear my hands of what

I had farther to say concerning my *Reveries*. Judge now if less Provocation than this would not be sufficient to wear out my Patience. But I will not give a loose to Passion at present, I reserve myself for our next Meeting; you would come off too easily in a Letter.

In order to proceed to the Sequel of my *Reveries*, it might be necessary to repeat the Substance of what I said in my last. The following, if I mistake not, is the Conclusion to be drawn from it:

That since all Men acknowledge Conscience invariable, in the Cases which we have specified; since they respect it in others as a divine Testimony, when it no ways clashes with their Passions, and mistrust it either in themselves, or others only, when it attacks them in those Passions, or their Prejudices, it must be really invariable in it self; and the Variations ascribed to it, proceed not from it, but from some foreign Cause, with which it has no Connection. This is explain'd by the Comparison of Light, which is in itself invariable, though different in its Effects on the Subjects exposed to it.

If we must give a good Sense to the universally received Maxim, instead of saying, *Conscience ought to be enlighten'd*, it should be said, *That we ought to allow Conscience to enlighten us, by endeavouring the Removal of all Obstacles in its way.*

In this sense, Conscience would no longer be charged with the Contrarieties, which ap-

pear in the different Sects that fill the World; since those very Contrarieties are the result of the Obstacles which each Man forms within himself, to the simple Lights of Conscience, and the Impressions of Truth.

Here a new Objection may be started: If Conscience is in all Men a divine Testimony, it is endowed with the Infallibility attributed to the Church, *&c.* If it is infallible, those who listen to it, and obey it, must become so too. We do not see this to be the case. Persons the most docil in following what their Conscience requires of them, are not secure from Error; we even find among them such Contrarieties and Difference of Sentiments, as seem to be so many Proofs, that their Guide is neither infallible, nor invariably the same.

This Difficulty is the same, in the main, with that which relates to the Multitude of Sects, and the Contrarieties subsisting among them. Conscience is not concerned here; on the contrary, Confusion has been successfully introduced into the World, because Conscience has not been sufficiently received and obeyed.

As to Persons who are docil in following what they believe Conscience requires of them, they are not indeed secure from Error, or Mistakes in point of Opinion, or speculative Ideas; because Conscience doth not begin to work in Man on Ideas or Opinions. As sound Ideas cannot make him essentially good, erroneous Ideas cannot render him essentially bad. What then is the first and chief Office

of

of Conscience? To labour to make Man upright in relation to Truth and himself: from which Uprightness toward his Neighbour necessarily results.

In order to bring him to this Uprightness, Conscience begins with shewing him the *False* within him, not in Ideas, but in the Will. The Influence of the Will over Man, is of a very different nature from that of Ideas. The Will alone is sufficient for leading him to every thing most divine, when it is upright; as well as to whatever is most diabolical, when it is void of Uprightness. When Conscience labours to rectify the Will, rather than Ideas, it doth not thereby leave Man a Prey to Error and Seduction; on the contrary, it, by this means, conducts him into the Path of Truth.

In proportion as the Will becomes upright, it enters into an *Equilibrium*, which divests the Mind of the Prejudices that obscured it, and were so many Obstacles to the Impressions of Truth. This *Equilibrium* is not acquired in a few days; it is formed imperceptibly, in proportion to the Progress of the Will in Uprightness; and the Will becomes upright only in as much as it performs all that Conscience may require of it.

Obedience to Conscience, therefore, is the true Key of Knowledge, it is the Introduction to all Truth. If this Key is in every Man's hand, why doth it let so few into the Path of Truth? It is because they either

know not how to uſe it, or will not uſe it. They would be diſpleaſed at being ſhewn too much that way; and thus they want the firſt Degree of Uprightneſs: for if they would give entrance to Truth, they ought not to endeavour to avoid it.

I believe, dear *Crito*, I have ſaid enough to clear Conſcience of the falſe Accuſations urged againſt it; but know not how you will juſtify your ill Uſage of me. I will aſk you to come no more; I am too angry with you. Beſides, I fear, that on your Arrival here, all my Fury would vaniſh, and I ſhould appear perfectly good-humoured.

DIALOGUE VIII.

CRITO *and* PHILO *meeting* ERASTUS *in the Country.*

Crito. SHALL we repoſe ourſelves in this charming Walk, *Philo? Eraſtus* may come hither accidentally; his Surprize would divert me.

Philo. We have been worſe than our Word ſo often, that it is extremely probable he has given over all Hopes of ſeeing us.

Crito. I ſhould have been very ſorry, if we had been able to come ſooner, *Philo.* He would not have prevailed with himſelf to write down what he calls his *Reveries*, which would have proved a great loſs to us. I know

know not whether you was as sensible as I, of the Force of his two last Letters.

Philo. I was so sensible of it, *Crito*, that methinks till that time I never had any Idea of the Reality of Religion, Conscience, and Uprightness. What *Eraſtus* said on those Points in our Walks, had made but very little impression on me: his Letters were necessary for opening my Eyes, and letting me see how little Uprightness I had. The last particularly has affected me very strongly, and convinced me, that I was deficient in the essential Point, and was as yet a Stranger to the first Degree of Uprightness, because I shut my Eyes against the Truth.

Crito. You do not imagine, *Philo*, that I am going to congratulate you on the Progress you are likely to make in the School of *Eraſtus*'s Master.

Philo. I very well deserve to be banter'd in my turn, dear *Crito*, after having rallied you so often on that Topic. I put on an Air of pleasantry; but at the bottom was really very jealous. I was not a little vexed, when I saw you hit the Mark on several occasions, while I shot wide.

Crito. I hear somebody stir in that Arbor; perhaps it is *Eraſtus*, who is gone to repose himself there, that he may meditate at his ease.

Philo. Let us walk that way, without making a noise, that he may not see us. I hear

ſomebody ſing? What if it ſhould be he? Do you hear what he is ſinging, *Crito?*

Crito. Huſh, let me liſten . . . . . Would you know the Words? they are theſe:

As the bright Ruler of the Day
The ſmalleſt Atoms makes appear;
So Truth, with one enlight'ning Ray,
Diſcovers what we truly are.

Philo. That's for me; one would imagine he knows we are here.

Crito. He knows nothing of the matter, *Philo*, as you ſhall ſee by his Surprize. Let us ſteal into the Arbor.

Crito. Give us that Song once more, *Eraſtus*; we ſhould be glad to learn it.

Eraſtus. Is this your way of ſurprizing Folks, Gentlemen? You have not allowed me time enough to put on my angry Face; it is now too late to attempt it; and I muſt appear in a Good-humour to you, in ſpite of my teeth.

Philo. But ſeriouſly, *Eraſtus*, did you not know we were near you? I thought you had choſen this Song for me.

Eraſtus. I know ſo little of the matter, *Philo*, that I had loſt all hopes of ſeeing you in the Country. I was preparing to go and quarrel with you in Town, where I propoſe being to-morrow. But, to my Song; pray in what Particular do you find it ſuits you?

Philo. It ſuits me as much, *Eraſtus*, as the Contents of your two Letters, or, if you pleaſe,

pleaſe, the *Reveries* you have communicated to us.

Crito. Did you know, *Eraſtus*, what an impreſſion your *Reveries* have made in *Philo*'s Mind, you would not have been ſo angry with me for engaging you to put them in writing.

Eraſtus. Are you in jeſt or in earneſt, when you talk to me at this rate?

Crito. I am very ſerious, *Eraſtus*; *Philo* can tell you how it is, better than I. All I can gueſs, from what he has ſaid to me on that Subject, is, that your two laſt Letters have made him open his Eyes to what he before fear'd ſeeing.

Eraſtus. I did not expect that *Reveries* could have done ſo much.

Philo. They've done enough for explaining what you had ſaid in our Walks concerning Conſcience, and what I neither would nor could underſtand. I was juſt telling *Crito*, that I was not a little vex'd to ſee him hit the Mark, while I ſhot wide, and perceived what I did not: not that I had a mind to enter into a Diſpoſition like his; but I was ſorry he was in ſuch an one, not caring he ſhould have that advantage over me. Have you not obſerved, *Eraſtus*, that my firſt Congratulations on the Progreſs he made, were a ſort of Compoſition of ſweet and ſour? I made uſe of them ſucceſsfully for Diverſion; when Truth became troubleſome to me, I immediately found ſome Plaſtron for guarding me againſt

it; eſpecially when the Queſtion turned on being upright and ſincere with one's ſelf, I could not bear that Article. When *Crito* accuſed himſelf of want of Honeſty, he gave me all the mortification imaginable. I felt, in ſpite of myſelf, that the Shoe pinch'd me there. To get rid of this trouble, I defended him charitably; and you ought to think me very civil in that particular.

Eraſtus. Dear *Philo*, I gueſſed well enough what was the Principle of that civil Humour. One who has been acquainted with the wiſe World, is very capable of diſcovering its Practices in another.

Philo. Now you mention the wiſe World, do you know I was cruelly mortified every time it was brought on the Stage; and the more ſo, as I endeavoured to put a good face on the matter, that you might not perceive how I was affected. I found my Character too well drawn in it, not to know myſelf there: but I would not ſee myſelf, much leſs own myſelf of that Claſs. *Crito* gave me much uneaſineſs, when he acknowledged he belonged to it with ſo much Ingenuouſneſs; that Frankneſs was as inſupportable to me, as it would have been agreeable, had it not reproached me.

Crito. You know how to compoſe yourſelf, *Philo*; and no one who ſaw you would have ſuppoſed you ſuffered ſo much.

Eraſtus. I could have judged very exactly of the Matter; and a certain Air of Perplexity

plexity ſpoke more to me, than an Air of Vexation and Anger.

Philo. I envied you both that Freedom and Eaſe which I obſerved in you; I diſſembled the beſt I could, that I might ſeem on the level with you; but it was all to no purpoſe. I was always under ſome reſtraint; the moſt I could do, was to run away; and when I perceived how the caſe ſtood with me, I found freſh Matter for Jealouſy, which I took great care to conceal. I found employment enough, when I undertook not to appear what I was, and to appear what I was not. Are you to be ſurprized, that I could not ſeem free and eaſy, while I had ſo ſerious an Affair on my hands?

Eraſtus. The wiſe World, which pretends to ape all that is beautiful and lovely, makes a Man counterfeit a ſort of Eaſe and Freedom, and even Ingenuouſneſs, though they are the contrary of its Character. But there is no leſs difference between that counterfeit Eaſe, and the true one, than between Braſs Counters and Louis-d'ors.

Philo. I conceive, that if Men could but once reſolve to ſee themſelves, and let others ſee them ſuch as they really are, Freedom, Eaſe, and Ingenuouſneſs, would be the natural reſult of ſuch a Diſpoſition. It would be a fine thing to ſee the Heart thus laid open; but then, on the other hand, would it not be a moſt frightful Sight?

Crito. I leave you to judge, *Philo*, what a Scene it would be to view Men devoted to Intereſt, Envy and Ambition, entirely puffed up with themſelves; not to mention groſſer Vices, which rather belong to the fooliſh World.

Philo. Is it not better Men ſhould continue maſked as they are, than play ſuch odious and deformed Parts in the World?

Eraſtus. The Maſk which Men wear, is what occaſions the greateſt Deformity. By the help of that, they not only conceal what they really are from others, but even hide themſelves from themſelves. The Uſe of it renders their Diſtemper incurable, ſo long as they remain Strangers to themſelves. Could Men reſolve to ſhew themſelves ſuch as they are, how deformed ſoever they might be, the Evil being diſcovered, would ſoon be removed. They would have too much Confuſion both before themſelves and others, to neglect the means of a Cure. Conſcience, not being ſtifled in them by Hypocriſy and Diſguiſe, would be a Clue to lead them out of this Labyrinth.

Crito. I imagine, *Eraſtus*, that Sincerity in ſhewing one's ſelf ſuch as one is, would be one ſtep toward Uprightneſs, which would allow Truth to make itſelf heard, and thus free Man from the Evil.

Eraſtus. Right, *Crito.* The leaſt degree of Uprightneſs would be ſufficient for making Men conquer the moſt corrupt Inclinations,

as they would not endeavour to conceal them from themselves.

Philo. What you observed in your last Letter, *Eraſtus*, concerning that first Degree of Uprightneſs, proved a Thunder-clap to me. I was convinced I had not that first Degree; since I could not bear the Impreſſions of Truth, when it aim'd at curing me of my Esteem for myself. I felt what Conſcience was, and that in a manner till then unknown to me. What you said of it in your Letters, made me feel something of it; but I have found that the least Experience teaches us more on that head, than all the Definition that can be given of it.

Crito. Do you remember, *Philo*, that, in one of our former Converſations, you asked *Eraſtus* for a Definition of Conſcience?

Philo. I chose rather to hear his Definition of it, than to be referred to my own. *Eraſtus* mortified me, when he refuſed my Requeſt.

Eraſtus. Several People find this Convenience in Definitions of Conſcience, that they make uſe of them for rendering themselves ſtill deafer to what might be offered. Conſcience is of so nice a nature, and so much ſuperior to Reaſoning, that it eſcapes from all Definitions. Those who delight in trifling, will always find room enough to do it on this head. They fight with their own Shadow; while Conſcience would ſecretly reproach them with want of Uprightneſs, if

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they would but listen to it one moment. But they are glad to seek it where it is not, that they may, with more Security, avoid being in a condition of hearing it.

Crito. Do you not see somebody, *Erastus*, who hastens towards us?

Erastus. He comes to call us to Dinner; let us not make the Company wait. We will take another Walk in the Afternoon. I will carry you into a little Grove, where we shall have more Shade than here.

DIALOGUE IX.

CRITO, PHILO, *and* ERASTUS.

Crito. HAve you not taken a little Nap since Dinner, *Philo?*

Philo. If I have not slept, I have had several *Reveries*. I know not whether this Humour be peculiar to *N*———'s Country-House, or whether I have caught it of *Erastus*; but I find it very agreeable. The Shade of these Chesnut-Trees seems to contribute to it; and I should have continued in it at least two Hours, had not you come and fetched me out of it.

Crito. We have teaz'd *Erastus* so much, to make him communicate his *Reveries* to us, that he will have a good right to make the like Demand on you.

Philo. My *Reveries* are of but little concern to *Erastus*; they are only the Impressions his have made on me.

Erastus.

Eraſtus. Do you imagine, *Philo*, that *Reveries* which are either the Sequel or Effect of mine, are of but little concern to me? I cannot be indifferent to the Good or Evil that reſults to you from them: if the latter, I ſhall be very ſorry; if the former, I ſhall be very glad, not only on a Principle of Friendſhip, but alſo on that of Self-love, which is delighted with having contributed to the advantage of one's Friends.

Philo. I believe, dear *Eraſtus*, that Self-love has not now much influence over you.

Eraſtus. If you entertain that Notion, *Philo*, I ought to undeceive you. I pretend to be no more than one eſcaped from the wiſe World; and how widely diſtant is ſuch a State from that of a Man on whom Self-love has no influence? I confeſs I have only a glimpſe of it at a great diſtance. I would fain find a more ſignificative Expreſſion, than that of a Man who has eſcaped from the wiſe World; it is too extenſive in a ſtrict ſenſe. If it is true in any ſenſe, it is only becauſe I have left off acting a Part in it, becauſe I ſee it ſuch as it really is, and do all in my power to keep at a diſtance from it. But if the ſame Expreſſion might be made to mean that I am ſtill belonging both to the wiſe and fooliſh World, by Habits hard to be rooted out, by Inclinations oppoſite to what is good, and Paſſions ſtill very ſtrong, it would then deſcribe me perfectly well. You are ſurprized, *Philo*, at the Picture I draw of myſelf; it is

not leſs to the Life than what I preſented you with the other day, in quality of an Actor in the wiſe World. All the Difference between the two Pieces is, that in one the Man is diſguiſed, ſtudies how to cheat the whole World, deceive himſelf, appear what he is not, and not appear what he really is; in the other, he endeavours to impoſe on no Man, but is willing to ſee the deformed Part of himſelf, and let others ſee him in the ſame light.

Philo. I was juſt going to tell you, *Eraſtus*, that Modeſty had a great ſhare in the Account you give of your preſent Diſpoſition. But I ſtopt ſhort, apprehending you would reprimand me, as you once did on the ſame occaſion. I am ſenſible likewiſe, that this way of ſpeaking would have been an effect of Self-love in me; while I conſidered you as much more advanced than myſelf, I ſhould not have been willing to perceive I had ſtill a long Journey to make.

Eraſtus. What advantage I may have over you, dear *Philo*, is very inconſiderable. The Uprightneſs of the Will, into which you ſeem to enter in good earneſt, will ſoon put us on the level. Though the Road be long, that ought to give us no trouble; if we begin with the Steps before us, we ſhall proceed in our Journey; and it is not neceſſary we ſhould yet ſee the end of it.

Another eſſential Difference between the Pictures in queſtion, is, that in one the Man has made choice of a fixt Point, where he is willing

willing to stop: he is very well satisfied with himself, and the Part he is acting; in the other, he stops no where, he still goes on where Conscience directs him, and is never satisfied with himself well enough to stay where he is.

Philo. You draw me very well, *Erastus*, in the first of those Pieces. I have hitherto been very well satisfied with myself, and the Part I acted in the World. I saw no Addition that could be made to my Wisdom; and should have been very angry, had any one attempted to remove me from the fixt Point, where I was resolved to stop. Your Stay here, and the Discourse we have had in our Walks, have frequently given me a secret uneasiness in that Particular. If I have shut my Eyes against the Truth, it is because I fear'd it would lead me farther than I was inclined to go. I every where find a want of Uprightness; that only stopt me. However, I made profession of valuing Uprightness beyond all that could be said.

Crito. Uprightness is a Principle so simple and inconteſtable, that all the World pretends to espouse its Cause. Uprightness in our Dealings with our Neighbour is constantly esteemed. Self-love is concern'd in it; we should be very well pleased that every one would deal uprightly with us; and for the same reason, we value ourselves on dealing so with others: but are absolutely ignorant from what Fund this Uprightness should proceed,

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in order to be real. Uprightneſs, in regard to Truth, and to ourſelves, is entirely unknown; and becauſe we want that, we are contented with knowing no more of it.

Eraſtus. It is impoſſible for a Man to be truly upright toward his Neighbour, unleſs he is firſt ſo toward Truth and himſelf. There is no Command for loving our Neighbour better than ourſelves. As to Truth, as it alone can enable us to diſtinguiſh what is right from what is not; how ſhall we liſten to it when it ſpeaks for our Neighbour, if we have not given it the Hearing when it ſpoke for ourſelves; that is, when it reproved us for the wrong done to ourſelves?

Philo. I know ſome Men who will admit of all you have ſaid concerning Uprightneſs toward Truth, on condition you did not by the word *Truth* underſtand the Language of Conſcience. That Term *Conſcience* has ſomething in it that gives them Pain.

Eraſtus. I conceive the Reaſon of that, *Philo*; it is becauſe the word *Conſcience* ſends them back too far into themſelves; whereas that of *Truth*, being leſs determinate, leaves them in a Perſuaſion, that the Truths in queſtion are ſuch as may be found without themſelves, and learnt by Reaſoning. Such Perſons hold Conſcience to be weak, as I ſaid in one of my Letters. I would fain aſk them, whether they have a Conſcience or not? They, in their turn, might aſk me, for what

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sort of People I take them, when I make that a Matter of doubt? If you have one, I should say, Is it upright or false? True, or a Lyar? They would readily reply, that it is true and upright. If so, I should ask them again, why they would not own the Language of Conscience, and that of Truth, to be one and the same thing?

Philo. Let them get out of that Scrape if they can.

Crito. In order to give them the finishing Stroke, one need only shew them what *Eraſtus* says in one of his Letters, or *Reveries*, concerning the invariable Rule by which every thing is to be corrected and regulated, and which itself admits of no Correction.

Philo. One of the Passages, which I think most proper for opening the Eyes of reasonable Men, is the Question which *Eraſtus* asks concerning the Use or Design of Conscience; whether it ought to be placed above or below Reasoning, or walk hand in hand with it, as its Equal. The Comparison of a Prince in his Minority, and a Regent, which follows that Question, serves to set Truth in a strong Light in that respect.

Eraſtus. Do you think, *Philo*, that good Reasoners could not get out of all those Difficulties? They would find Evasions enow; I am in no manner of pain for them. I observed to you this Morning, that such as delight in trifling, are under but little Apprehension from the justest Definitions, which

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can be given of Conscience. By accustoming themselves to dispute about the Definition, they put themselves still less in a Condition of hearing the Decisions of their own Conscience. Thus they gain their End; which is all they desire.

Crito. From your saying this Morning that Conscience is above the reach of all Definitions, I imagine it bears some resemblance to Light. All the Definitions which can be given of Light, can never help us to any Idea of it. Define it to a blind Man, he will be never the wiser. Define it to a Peasant, who has good Eyes, you'll make no addition to the Idea or Opinion he has of it.

Philo. This comes to what *Erastus* says in one of his Letters. The Obstacles to Light are in Man himself; it is on Man we must go to work, if we wou'd remove the Obstacles which hinder Truth from reaching him.

Crito. These Obstacles must certainly be very considerable in all Men, since so few give entrance to Truth. Almost all Men are Slaves to Error, Superstition, and the most extravagant Opinions. The small Number capable of knowing Truth (I mean, the Christians) are attached to their Passions, blinded by their Prejudices, and a Presumption of their being perfectly clear-sighted. It is impossible to say on which side the Obstacles are most hard to be removed, or how it may be effected. It is to no purpose for me to say to myself, that Uprightness of Will,

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and Obedience to Conscience are sufficient for that end; this seems false from Experience, in regard to great numbers of Pagans, who have appear'd Men of Integrity; and yet Conscience has not disengag'd them from Error.

Philo. We may make the same Observation in regard to several Christians, who seem to have a very tender Conscience, and yet it does not cure them of Superstition.

Eraſtus. What you say, *Crito*, includes two Questions; First, What are the Obstacles most difficult to be remov'd? Secondly, Whether it be possible that Uprightness of Will, and Obedience to Conscience should be sufficient to effect it.

Let us, if you please, distinguish two sorts of Obstacles; one voluntary, the other involuntary. I now speak of all Men in general, both Christians and Pagans.

I say then that Uprightness of Will and Obedience to Conscience, are perfectly sufficient for removing voluntary Obstacles; and that such as are involuntary may be more or less surmounted by the same Means, as certain Circumstances are less or more favourable.

Philo. Were I not a little stupid, I should understand you at half a word, without any further Explication. But I must do myself Justice in this point, and beg you wou'd illustrate what you say by some Examples.

Eraſtus.

Eraſtus. Let us firſt conſider what involuntary Obſtacles are. They are what we neither cou'd prevent nor hinder; ſuch as Men have rais'd in us, without our Conſent, and before it was in our power to guard againſt them. Of this ſort are falſe Notions in Points of Religion, the extravagant and ſuperſtitious Opinions, which are forged in the heads of young People, before they have time to give their Conſent to them.

Of this ſort likewiſe, are the bad Examples of vicious Perſons, join'd to their pernicious Maxims which inſinuate themſelves into young Hearts, before they can ſuſpect the tendency of them. This laſt kind of Obſtacles, which are at firſt involuntary, may afterwards become voluntary.

Philo. I now very well underſtand in what involuntary Obſtacles conſiſt. You ſee, *Eraſtus*, I have ſome Penetration; but I am afraid you will ſoon have another Notion of me in that reſpect, if I aſk you in what voluntary Obſtacles conſiſt.

Crito. I imagine myſelf ſufficiently able to anſwer that Queſtion, *Philo.* They are ſuch as depend on the Will.

Philo. None but a Philoſopher, like *Crito*, could have demonſtrated that nothing more reſembles what is white than Whiteneſs.

Eraſtus. It muſt be own'd, that voluntary Obſtacles are more eaſily underſtood than defined, unleſs we would be content with *Crito*'s Definition. As ridiculous as it is, we ſhall

not

not fail to make some advantage of it; and that by considering what are the Obstacles which depend on the Will.

Crito. You see, *Philo*, that *Eraſtus* sets some value on what you despise so much.

Eraſtus. One of the first things that depends on the Will, is to listen to Remorse of Conscience, or to stifle it. If the Will takes the first way, it thereby begins to be upright, which is an Introduction to all Good. If the last, it enters into the *False*, which is the beginning of all Evil.

When the Will has once enter'd into the first Degree of Uprightness, it depends on that Faculty to advance in the same Path, and to be call'd from the first to the second, from the second to the third, and so on, as long as it does not go out of the way. This is not hard to conceive. Can it be doubted that it is in the power of my Will to avoid all voluntary Evil, and in that point perform what my Conscience requires of me. Now Conscience requires nothing impossible; it never reproaches us with what we are not able to avoid. Supposing then that I honestly give myself up to its Direction, either to renounce all it may forbid me, or to perform all it may require of me; are not voluntary Obstacles thus remov'd? And is it not incontestable, as I have advanc'd, that Uprightness of Will, and Obedience to Conscience, are abundantly sufficient for removing all voluntary Obstacles?

Philo.

Philo. What you ſay, *Eraſtus*, is evident in regard to Practice. If my Conſcience never requires what is impoſſible, it is certainly in my power to obey it. But in regard to ſpeculative Truths, (I mean, the moſt important) does Conſcience lead us as directly to them? And is it ſufficient for removing the Obſtacles which oppoſe them?

Eraſtus. In order to anſwer this laſt Queſtion, we muſt uſe ſeveral *Diſtinguo's*. We muſt firſt know what you call *important Truths*; and whether the Obſtacles which oppoſe their Reception, are voluntary or involuntary.

Philo. By important Truths, I underſtand thoſe reveal'd to us in the Goſpel, concerning the coming of JESUS CHRIST, his Life, Death, Reſurrection, with others of the ſame nature. It is evident that an Infinity of Men have not been conducted to theſe Truths by Conſcience; of this ſort are the great multitude of Pagans, Jews and Mahometans; not to mention the Numbers of thoſe who diſfigure the Goſpel by erroneous Tenets, which they pretend to have found in it. As to the Obſtacles which oppoſe the eſtabliſhment of Truth, among thoſe different People, I have not ſufficiently inquired in what Claſs they are to be ranged, ſo as to ſpeak deciſively on that point.

Eraſtus. Do you remember, *Philo*, that about half an hour ago, you told me you very well underſtood the Nature of involuntary

tary Obſtacles, from the detail I gave you of them?

Philo. I do remember it, *Eraſtus.*

Eraſtus. Do you not find then that the different People, of whom you ſpoke juſt now, are ſurrounded by involuntary Obſtacles, ſuch as I deſcribed: that they are beſet with them before they can ſuſpect them, and conſequently guard againſt them? Let us take a *Jew*, for example, before he can well ſpeak, he is inſpir'd on one hand with an extreme horror of *Chriſtians*; on the other, with a blind Obedience for all his Parents teach him concerning Religion. The Caſe is the ſame with the *Turks*; and what is ſtill more ſurprizing, *Chriſtians* themſelves are not in a better Situation on account of the different Parties or Religions, which they profeſs. Such of them, particularly, as pretend to have Infallibility among them, are ſurrounded by Obſtacles, not only involuntary, but almoſt inſuperable in regard to the Knowledge of certain Truths.

Philo. I am very ſenſible, *Eraſtus*, that all thoſe different Ranks of Men cannot be blameable for the Obſtacles among which they are born, and which are thrown in their way without their Conſent.

Eraſtus. Pray tell me, *Philo*; does Conſcience reproach Men with things for which they are not to be blamed, and which did not depend on them?

Philo.

Philo. A pretty Queſtion! That would be unjuſt.

Eraſtus. This is the reaſon, why Conſcience in a *Jew* or *Mahometan*, doth not reproach him for being a Jew or Mahometan, nor for the Exerciſes of Religion, which he practiſes as ſuch. Let us ſay the ſame of a ſincere Chriſtian, who ſhould from his Infancy imbibe the Prejudices of the infallible Sect. Conſcience makes him no reproach on that ſcore, nor for the ſuperſtitious Practices which may reſult from it. With much more reaſon may the Application be made to a Pagan; in a word, to all the People whom we call Idolaters, and who have been leaſt in the way of knowing the Truth.

Crito. This ſolves the Objection I ſtarted concerning the Inſufficiency of Uprightneſs of Will, among ſeveral very worthy Pagans, for diſengaging them from Errors.

Philo. Here you muſt give me an Explanation of what you advanc'd e'en now, in regard to which I told you I was a little dull of Apprehenſion. We were talking of voluntary and involuntary Obſtacles. Having aſſerted that Uprightneſs of Will and Obedience to Conſcience, were ſufficient for ſurmounting voluntary Obſtacles, you added that, by the ſame means, a Man might more or leſs ſurmount involuntary ones, as ſome certain Circumſtances were more or leſs favourable. I very well underſtand the firſt Article; but beg you wou'd explain the ſecond.

Eraſtus.

Erastus. Let us suppose a *Jew*, for example, whose Will is upright, and who pays a faithful Obedience to his Conscience in practical things; this Docility will insensibly carry him on to a better Acquaintance with himself. If he knows himself, he will begin to be diffident of himself, and perceive he is capable of Prejudices and Obstinacy, in regard to Religion. As soon as he comes to see himself in this Point of View, he will be on his guard against all that may offer itself from that quarter against Christianity. He will then resolve to enter into an impartial Disposition in regard to Truth, and receive it from what quarter soever it come; and even doubt whether it may not be found in Christianity. Thence he will go so far as to take a resolution of embracing that Religion, supposing Truth is found in it, whatever it may cost him. Thus far we see that in this *Jew*, Uprightness of Will, and Obedience to Conscience, have remov'd voluntary Obstacles, and made way for Truth. He is thereby placed in that *Equilibrium*, which disposes the Soul to receive all the Impressions of it. Now tell me, *Philo*, do you think a Man very far from the Truth, when he has proceeded thus far, tho' he is unacquainted with the particular Circumstances, reveal'd to us in the Gospel, relating to the Life, Death and Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST? And supposing this *Jew* dies in so upright a Disposition, before it is in his power to get such a

thorough Information of the Truth, as is ſufficient for embracing Chriſtianity; do you think, I ſay, that his Fate wou'd on that account only be more miſerable at his Death?

Philo. I am far from being of that Opinion. He cannot be culpable of what did not depend on him. But, ſuppoſing the ſame *Jew* ſhould live ſeveral Years after he had enter'd into this Diſpoſition, wou'd he not be infallibly led by his Uprightneſs to embrace Chriſtianity?

Eraſtus. Not infallibly; that wou'd depend on the Circumſtances, more or leſs favourable, in which he might be. This is what I was juſt now ſaying, and what you found ſome difficulty to conceive. I will therefore explain it to you. To this end, inſtead of one *Jew* we muſt ſuppoſe two, in an equal diſpoſition of Uprightneſs in regard to Truth.

Philo. I heartily wiſh, dear *Eraſtus*, I could ſuppoſe the time wou'd permit us to hear the ſequel of your Diſcourſe, without danger of being ſhut out of Town; but I think it is high time to retire, and that we have not a Moment to loſe.

Crito. You did well in reminding us, *Philo*; for I believe, I ſhould have run that hazard, rather than interrupt either of you.

Philo. I leave you to judge, *Crito*, what I have loſt by it. I imagine myſelf like a School-Boy, who leaves half his Breakfaſt at home, for want of time to finiſh it. I hope

Eraſtus

Eraſtus will feel ſome Remorſe, that will oblige him to ſend me the remainder of mine.

Eraſtus. I rather chuſe to bring it you, dear *Philo*; for I muſt be in Town to-morrow.

DIALOGUE X.

In TOWN.

PHILO, CRITO, and ERASTUS.

Crito, to Eraſtus. THIS is being a Man of your word. Had *Eraſtus* been revengeful, he might have been even with us, by putting us off from day to day.

Eraſtus. I ſhould have been the firſt Sufferer, *Philo*; how much ſoever I like the Country, I had no Inclination to ſpend the few days there, which I have for ſeeing my Friends.

Crito. Cannot thoſe few days be prolonged in their favour?

Eraſtus. It ſhall not be my fault, *Crito*, if they are not. But I beg we may not talk on that Subject, I have nothing of the *Stoick* in me; I may allow the Thought to affect me in a manner that will ſpoil our Walk.

Philo. To avoid that, *Eraſtus*, I muſt aſk you what you have done with our *Jew*, or rather with the two *Jews*, whom you was bringing on the Stage?

Eraſtus. If you pleaſe, *Philo*, they ſhall join us in our Walk; I am going to pull

them out of my Pocket, where I put them laſt Night.

[Eraſtus *takes a Paper out of his Pocket, which he delivers to* Philo, *who reads it to himſelf.*]

Crito. How hardly you deal with theſe poor *Jews*, *Eraſtus*, by confining them in ſo cloſe a Priſon!

Eraſtus. After you left me, I obſerv'd they follow'd me wherever I went; and became ſo troubleſome, that I was oblig'd to have recourſe to this expedient for my own eaſe.

Crito. It were to be wiſhed a Man could get rid of all troubleſome Perſons with as little difficulty. But few of them are in the humour of being pocketed thus.

Philo. I could very eaſily be in the humour of charging you with being troubleſome, *Crito.* You hinder me from underſtanding one Word of what I am reading.

Crito. It is partly to puniſh you, *Philo*, for keeping all to yourſelf; had you begun to read aloud, no-body wou'd have interrupted you.

Philo. I cannot read aloud as I walk, *Crito*; let us ſit down, and I will do the Office of a friendly Reader.

Crito. That Expedient will reconcile our difference. I offer myſelf as your Aſſiſtant, as ſoon as you are tired.

Philo. There will not be Employment enough for two; I am going to begin.

" How

" How to find out more easily, how the " *Uprightness* of the Will, and Obedience to " Conscience, may lead more or less to the " clear and distinct Knowledge of certain " Truths.

" I have said, we must suppose two *Jews*, " instead of one, and both in the same de- " gree of Uprightness and Fidelity in obey- " ing their Consciences; here then you see " them, so far as the Will is concern'd, in " a perfect *Equilibrium*, in regard to Truth. " If they have any Obstacles still remaining, " which oppose its Impressions, the Will has " no share in them; those Obstacles come " from a more remote quarter, as we have " already observ'd; they were form'd in " them before it was in their power to mis- " trust them.

" Let us now see how different Circum- " stances may concur towards putting two " Persons so equal, as to the main of their " Dispositions, in a different Point of View, " in regard to Opinions.

" First then, we are to place our two " *Jews* in different Countries, though both " in a condition of knowing the Christians, " and hearing them talk of Religion. To " distinguish them the better, I shall call one " *Joseph*, the other *Benjamin*; they shall " both be supposed willing to doubt, whe- " ther they are in possession of Truth or not; " so that here we see each of them employ'd

" in seeking Christians capable of giving " them Information.

" *Joseph* lives in a Country (*Holland*) " where Christians are divided into several " Sects, such as Roman Catholicks, Calvi- " nists, Lutherans, Greeks, Anabaptists. " He is in a condition of enquiring into the " Tenets of each, and determining where " Truth is?

" *Benjamin* is not in a condition of making " the same Enquiry. In the Country where " he lives, (*Avignon*) only one Sect of Chri- " stians is allow'd. His Situation appears " much less advantageous than that of *Jo-* " *seph.* After he has thoroughly examin'd " the Doctrine and Conduct of such Chri- " stians, he has more dislike to them than " ever; and concludes that, if the Chri- " stians, whom he knows not, are no better, " they are not in possession of the Truth. " However, he suspends his Judgment, and " proposes to travel for a thorough Informa- " tion.

" Let us return to *Joseph.* Without " leaving his own Country, he takes a view " of the different Sects of Christians, applying " himself to the Doctors of each successively.

" He finds Men more eager in extolling " the Excellency of their own particular Sect " over the rest, than in shewing the superior " Excellency of Christianity in general. What " gives him most perplexity is, that each

" Sect

" Sect pretends to be the Depositary of pure
" Truth, exclusive of all the rest.

" He finds among the Doctors of each
" Sect a Spirit of Partiality, positive and pas-
" sionate against all other Parties. Those of
" the infallible Sect, in particular, shock and
" discourage him in proportion to the At-
" tempts they make for gaining him.

" From the Ecclesiastics, he goes to the
" Laity; where he finds the Mind possessed
" with the same Prejudices; a Set of Men,
" among whom Religion is placed only in
" Memory, or outward Show, to which
" they give the Name of Worship; among
" whom Conscience is known only by Name;
" or the Advantage they are able to make of
" that of other Men; People, who, in
" short, idolize themselves, are their own
" Center, and their own End.

" Here now our poor *Joseph* is still more
" and more embarassed. His Fund of Upright-
" ness helps him to discover in the nominal
" Christians, a *False*, which makes him like
" them the less, the better he knows them.

" However, he is not yet quite discou-
" raged; he is reduced to a Supposition that
" the Religion of Christians is different from
" their Practice; all that puzzles him is the
" Division and Opposition of Parties. From
" the Laity he goes back to the Doctors;
" and proposes an expedient for informing
" himself thoroughly of the Truth; which is
" to let him see how they agree in the Essen-

" tials of Religion, and give him a view of " that in a ſimple and preciſe manner, with- " out requiring him to take the Name of one " Sect or Party rather than another, or per- " plexing himſelf with particular Opinions.

" The Propoſal appears reaſonable. A " Day is fix'd for diſcuſſing the Queſtion. " The Doctors of each Sect chuſe ſuch of their " Number as they eſteem furniſhed with the " beſt Abilities; and thus form a ſort of Sy- " nod. The *Jew* doth not inſiſt on being " admitted into it; he is content to wait the " Reſult of their Deliberation. Let us now " ſee how they proceed.

" At firſt great Civilities and much Po- " liteneſs are uſed among the Doctors; they " mutually promiſe to make ſome Conceſ- " ſions on all ſides for the common Intereſt " of Chriſtianity: the Queſtion here is not " concerning the Converſion of one ſingle " *Jew*, but of great Numbers, who may be " influenced by his Example; this is a ſuf- " ficient Motive for engaging them to exert " themſelves in a particular manner.

" They begin with diſcuſſing the funda- " mental Points, or the Articles of the Creed, " on which they eaſily agree; as they do " likewiſe in admitting the Scripture to be " the Word of GOD.

" Thus far they are of a mind. One of " the Company propoſes to ſtop here, and " preſent the *Jew* with the Chriſtian Reli- " gion in a plain, and at the ſame time ex-

" tenſive

" extensive manner, without embarassing " him with the particular Senses, which each " Party pretends to find in the Sacred Writ- " tings.

" The Proposal is unanimously hissed; " according to them, the thing is impracti- " cable, and subject to a thousand Inconve- " niencies. After all, what sort of a Chri- " stian wou'd a Man be, who is not first in- " structed by the Doctors in the true Sense " of the Scripture; who rests satisfied with " being a Christian in general, without de- " claring for any particular Religion? A " Christian like this wou'd be a Man with- " out Religion; and we all know how per- " nicious a thing it is to profess an Indiffe- " rence to particular Religions, not to say " Sects. Hence it is unanimously concluded, " that if the *Jew* embraces Christianity, he " must at the same time declare for some par- " ticular Religion, must take one Side or " another; in a word, he must have a Re- " ligion.

" Here they are once more all of a mind. " There remains now but one Point to be " cleared up or decided, *viz.* which is the " true Religion, which the best adapted for " securing Salvation; in short, which is most " agreeable to the Gospel, and the Doctrine " of the Apostles.

" This is the difficult Point; the more " they strive to clear it up, the more per- " plex'd it appears. After five or six hours

" employ'd in the Diſcuſſion of this ſingle " Queſtion, every one is juſt where he be- " gun; each pretends that his own Religion " is the only one exempt from Error, and " teaches the Evangelical Truth in all its Pu- " rity.

" *Joſeph* by this time grows impatient to " know the Concluſion of the Doctors: He " is introduced into the Aſſembly: is told " what has paſſed: that the whole Company " are perfectly agreed on all Points, except " the laſt, which relates to his Choice of a " Party. Upon this, the Moderators or " Deans of each Party, one after another, " entertain *Joſeph* with an Apology for their " reſpective Sects: Each of them maintains " that his alone can juſtly claim the Title of " Religion; that all the reſt are no better " than ſo many Sects, where the Truth is " falſified, and diſguiſed ſo as not to be " known.

" Diſcourſes ſo oppoſite one to the other " ſtrike *Joſeph* quite dumb: He is ſilent for " ſome time: He recollects what he has read " in the *Moſaic* Hiſtory concerning the " Tower of *Babel*, and the Confuſion of " Tongues. This ſilence gives each of the " Doctors hopes that he will declare for his " Sect; and each grows impatient to hear " the *Jew* pronounce in his favour. At laſt " *Joſeph* comes to a Reſolution: He cuts " the *Gordian* Knot, by declaring that the " Confuſion of Tongues muſt ceaſe among " them,

" them, particularly among the Guides, be-
" fore he becomes a Christian: *That Truth*
" *being one, cannot be unlike itself:* That, if
" the Christians are really the People of GOD,
" there is reason to expect that, sooner or
" later, he will raise up Guides, who will
" not oppose one another: That the Con-
" duct of GOD in regard to the antient *Is-*
" *raelites* is a Proof of this: That, as soon
" as he sees the way made plain, and the
" Guides united walk first in it, he will wil-
" lingly follow them; since nothing keeps
" him at a distance from Christianity, but
" the Division he sees amongst Christians.

" *Joseph* upon this retires, without wait-
" ing for any farther Reply; and not meet-
" ing with Christians of a different make
" from these, during the Course of his whole
" Life, he retains the Name of a *Jew*; and
" under an Appearance so despicable in the
" Eyes of nominal Christians, conceals the
" Interior of a true Christian, or the Dispos-
" tion which is the essential Part of it."

Eraſtus. Are you not tired, *Philo?* The Article of *Joseph* is somewhat long.

Crito. Let me read that of *Benjamin.* I am impatient to know what Part he is to act; that of *Joseph* has been very agreeable to me in its kind.

Philo. It gives one a glimpse, in several parts, of more than it expresses. Here is matter for several *Reveries.* Was I to follow

my own Inclinations, I should reserve the Article of *Benjamin* for to-morrow.

Crito. I have not so much Patience as you, *Philo*; I am too desirous of seeing the Sequel, to come to that Resolution. Give me the Paper; I'll read it to myself, if you had rather indulge your *Reveries* than hear.

Philo. Read aloud, *Crito*; I shall find an Opportunity for that another time.

Crito reads.

" We left *Benjamin* big with a Design of " travelling, in order to make himself ac- " quainted with the several Sects of Chri- " stians. He sets out, and visits several Ci- " ties, Academies and Universities.

" His first Observation in general is, that " all Christians, of what Sect soever, are ex- " actly of the same mind in one Point. That " Point is a Love of Riches, an insatiable " Desire of adding to their Fortunes. In " that respect, they are more *Jews* than the " *Jews* themselves. *Benjamin* cannot enough " wonder at seeing Men, who acknowledge " JESUS of *Nazareth*, the Son of a poor " Carpenter, for their King, do all in their " power for raising themselves to Dignities, " for enriching themselves; in fine, for be- " ing the direct contrary of what he was in " this World.

" He finds the same Spirit generally dif- " fused through the Ecclesiastics of all Sects. " In this respect, they seem not less the re-

" verse

" verse of the Fishermen or Apostles, than " the Gross of Christians are of Jesus.

" He asks himself how Men, so uniform " in the main, whose Inclinations are so ex- " actly the same, should be divided, and " wrangle about Opinions; the Difference " of which lies, or is considerable, only in " the Imagination? He is tempted to tell " them, they are better agreed than they " imagine; that, instead of being divided " into several Sects or Religions, they are " all of the same.

" What is remarkable is, that they are so " at the bottom of their Hearts; they per- " form not the Acts of it out of Grimace, or " perfunctorily. This Religion has an uni- " versal Influence over all their Opinions, " and over their whole Conduct, even when " they do not think of it. Without reflect- " ing on it, they accomplish its Precepts.

" *Benjamin*, conceiving this Idea of the " Power which Religion must have over the " whole Man, can find among the Christians " but one Religion, which is the same that " reigns equally over all corrupt Persons, " whether Pagans, Jews, or Mahometans; " and which at the bottom is nothing but an " idolatrous Self-Love, divided into as many " Branches as Men have Passions and vicious " Inclinations.

" *Benjamin* looked not out for such a Re- " ligion among Christians; he enquired for " Christianity; could he enquire for it else-

" where? What is Christianity then, says " he within himself? Whither must I go to " find it? In the Gospel, and in the Me- " mory of Christians?

" Thereupon he proposes to hear their " most celebrated Doctors; he applies suc- " cessively to several, and of different Sects. " Each of them gives so beautiful an Idea of " Christianity, that *Benjamin* tells them, at that " rate there are no Christians in the World. " One of them owns, there is but too much " Truth in the Observation. To whom do " you preach then? says the *Jew*. To " Christians in appearance, replies the Doc- " tor; but, generally speaking, to real Pa- " gans.

" Hence *Benjamin* concludes it better for " him to remain a *Jew*, with Uprightness, " and the Fear of God, than enter into a So- " ciety, where every one knows how to dis- " guise himself, so as to appear what he is " not, and not appear what he is.

" He now resolves to return into his own " Country: he has no farther Enquiry to " make among the Christians; he has con- " versed with their different Sects, heard " their most celebrated Doctors, and found " no Uprightness or Simplicity among them. " This is sufficient for discouraging him.

" He sets out; and in an Inn meets with a " Company of Christians, who attack him " on Religion. One of them is silent; *Ben-* " *jamin* looks attentively at him, and finds

" some-

" ſomething in his Countenance that ſtrikes " him. He diſengages himſelf from the reſt, " and accoſts him. He aſks him whether " he is not a Chriſtian, and why he does not " undertake to convert him, as the others " had done. 'Tis, replies he, becauſe I am " thinking to become a Chriſtian myſelf. " Was you not born a Chriſtian then, ſays " *Benjamin?* I was indeed born of Parents " called Chriſtians, replies the ſame Perſon, " (to whom we ſhall give the Name of *Sin-* " *cerus*) but that alone does not make a " Man a Chriſtian; much more is required. " *Benjamin* ſurprized at this Anſwer, in or- " der to engage him to explain himſelf, aſks " him of what Religion or Sect he is. *Sin-* " *cerus* replies, that he aſpires only at be- " coming a true Chriſtian, without giving " himſelf the trouble of engaging in any " Sect; that thoſe Diviſions and Oppoſi- " tions ſhew they are Sects, not Religions; " becauſe Religion is one, and cannot be di- " vided.

" *Benjamin*, ſtill more aſtoniſhed at find- " ing a Chriſtian of this Make, aſks him, " whether it is poſſible for a *Jew* to become " a Chriſtian, without taking the Name of " ſome Sect, and declaring for it againſt all " others? To which *Sincerus* replies, that " if it was poſſible to be a Chriſtian in former " Times, before the Introduction of Sects, " it is poſſible to be one now, without en- " gaging in any: that we are not to judge

" of

" of Christianity by the Dresses with which " each Sect disguises itself: that it is in itself " very simple, and consequently independent " of the particular Opinions to which Men " pretend to confine it: that Christianity is, " in substance, no more than the Religion of " *Abraham* and *David*, renewed by JESUS: " a Religion, whose Bases are Uprightness " and Obedience to Conscience; all the Pre- " cepts of which are reduced to the Creature's " being sincerely devoted to the Creator; a " Disposition which includes all the Sacrifices " that the true Children of *Abraham* may " have been obliged to offer, to shew the " Strength of their Faith, and the Sincerity " of their Love.

" *Benjamin*, whose Uprightness has al- " ready prepared the Way for all Truths that " may be proposed to him, feels the whole " Force of this. He assures *Sincerus*, that " the Veil is removed from his Eyes; and " that, if he had seen Christianity in this " Light sooner, he should have been a Chri- " stian long before.

" They afterwards discourse more at large " on the Life of JESUS, his Instructions, his " Sufferings, and the Design of his Death. " I shall not relate what was said on those " Subjects. I only add, that *Benjamin*, by " the Uprightness of his Will, having al- " ready the Disposition essential to a true " Christian, finds no difficulty in becoming " such in all respects, and, pursuant to the

" same

" same Disposition, exposing himself to all " the Persecutions which the false *Jews* may " raise against him.

" By this Example we may see how diffe- " rent Circumstances may combine to place " Persons equally upright in the main, in " different Points of View, in regard to cer- " tain Truths.

" Here now are our two *Jews* in the same " degree of Uprightness, and equally faith- " ful in obeying their Consciences. By " which means, one is brought to the clear " knowledge of Evangelical Truths: the " other still remains in the dark, in that re- " spect. But this Obscurity cannot render " him culpable; it comes from foreign " Causes, in which his Will has no share. " Had he been in the same Circumstances as " *Benjamin*, he too would have become a " Christian.

" From all which it may be concluded, " that one is not less agreeable to God than " the other; though under a different Name; " and that he is not a *Jew* or a *Christian*, " who is outwardly such."

Philo. You will give me leave to pocket the *Jews* in my turn, *Erastus*; I have a mind to be acquainted with them; and though they are *Jews*, I shall not be ashamed to receive their Instructions concerning the Essence of Christianity.

Crito. You imagine then, *Philo*, that you need only ask to the prejudice of others, in order

order to obtain your Requeſt immediately. Take notice that I oppoſe you in this Point; and, as much a Lawyer as you are, you ſhall not deal with me ſo eaſily as you imagine.

Philo. Well, *Crito*, will you refer the Matter to *Eraſtus?*

Crito. I ſubmit to all he ſhall ſay; he need only pronounce.

Eraſtus. Since I muſt decide the Matter, each ſhall take the Article he has read.

Crito. On that foot, *Philo* is to pocket *Joſeph*, and I *Benjamin*. I think myſelf well off, and readily ſubmit to the Sentence.

Philo. So do I, *Crito*, on condition that we change to-morrow.

DIALOGUE XI.

CRITO, PHILO, and ERASTUS.

Crito. DO you know, *Eraſtus*, that after our yeſterday's Bargain, *Philo* was very unwilling to part with *Joſeph*, when he had got *Benjamin?* He wanted to keep them both; and I believe would have done ſo, had not he ſeen you coming.

Philo. I ſhould have kept them only till this Evening, *Crito*; and you might have obliged me ſo far. I perceive this *Joſeph* has ſeveral Leſſons in ſtore for me, and that I am far from being at the bottom as good a Chriſtian as he is.

Crito. Dear *Philo*, what do you mean?

Philo,

Philo. I mean, *Eraſtus*, that I ſhould think myſelf very happy, if my Will was in ſuch an *Equilibrium*, as not to reſiſt the Impreſſion of any kind of Truth, whatever I might ſuffer for it.

Eraſtus. You would be ſo much the happier, *Philo*, in having ſurmounted all voluntary Obſtacles to the Impreſſions of Truth, as you would then have very few of thoſe we have called involuntary. The Sect in which we are born has this advantage over the others, that it doth not form ſo ſtrong an oppoſition in us to all that may come from another Quarter. We make a profeſſion of leaving the way of Examination open to all the World. In our time particularly Men inſiſt more than formerly on not judging of things by the Eyes of others, or by ſuch Prejudices as Education may have formed. Freedom from Prejudice, Impartiality, and Toleration in point of Opinion are in vogue; and though ſeveral value themſelves on them, without well knowing what they are, they thereby give others an opportunity of making uſe of them.

Philo. It is certain this way has its Advantages for thoſe who are willing to receive the Truth without reſtriction, and without ſetting bounds to it; involuntary Obſtacles are thereby removed. We ſhould not have enjoyed the ſame Liberty in the time of rigid Orthodoxy; what Profeſſion ſoever was then made of laying no Reſtraint on Men's Conſciences,

sciences, they were still kept under a sort of Slavery, something like Infallibility, from which it was impossible to disengage one's self, without passing for a Heretic and a dangerous Man.

Erastus. That Spirit is not every where extinguished; we still see several Marks of it among those who cannot suffer it in their Neighbours.

Crito. That Spirit of Tyranny in Matters of Religion, seems extinguished among us more than any where else.

Erastus. Though it seems extinguished, we perceive some Sparks of it still remaining in several Persons, when they happen to be shock'd by some strong Truths.

Philo. Why must Truth, which, in a certain sense, has so many Charms, be in another so burthensome, not to say insupportable?

Erastus. If you would understand this, dear *Philo*, you must distinguish original and universal Truth, which is always *one*, from particular and distinct Truths, which are numerous. The latter proceed from the former, and depend on it as the Rays on the Sun; whereas the former is as independent on the latter, as the Sun is of its Rays.

Excuse me, if this Comparison is somewhat lame. You know it is a common fault in Comparisons; and may be much more easily committed, when we are comparing spiritual things with material.

Simple,

Simple, universal Truth has always existed in God; before any Creatures were in being, it was what it now is, and ever will be. It has acquired nothing by their Existence, and can lose nothing, though they were annihilated.

Particular Truths are only a Consequence of the Existence of the Creatures. Were there no Creatures, there would be no particular Truths. As the Creatures are several, and distinct one from another; the Truths, which are relative to them, are also several and distinct one from another.

These Truths are all that can be known of the Works of God, as well in inanimate or irrational, as in animated and rational Beings.

All the Manifestations which God has made to Man of his Designs in general, and of the particular Means, which may conduct them to Happiness.

Here now is a very plain Distinction between simple or universal Truth, which is but one, and particular or distinct Truths, which are many.

Conscience is in all Men a Witness of simple Truth; it is * *invariable* and *upright*, without Ambiguity, incapable of Correction, being itself the Rule which ought to correct every thing opposite to it. The Disorder and the *False* which is found in Man, naturally produce in him a secret and strong Aversion to all that can reform him. He dreads

* See the second and third Letters of *Eraſtus* to *Crito*.

dreads the Testimony of this simple Truth, the Authority of which often commands Respect, even against his Will, and which he cannot contradict. Not being able to contradict it, he at least does all in his power to avoid hearing it. To compass his Ends the better, he makes use of a Stratagem; he throws himself out of himself, and applies himself entirely to Study or the Knowledge of particular Truths. In their Variety he finds Charms and Advantages, the most considerable of which, is that of forgetting himself, and almost putting it out of his power to understand the too sincere Language of simple Truth.

Philo. I imagine, *Eraſtus*, I guess what you aim at. The Contrast which I see in Man, in regard to Truth, disappears, or is unfolded by the Distinction you have made. I conceive, that by the Truth, which has so many Charms for him, and of which the Generality of Mankind is so greedy, we are not to understand simple Truth, which is one; but distinct or particular Truths, which are many.

Eraſtus. It would be great pity, dear *Philo*, to explain things better to you, since you understand them at half a word.

Philo. However, *Eraſtus*, I beg you would explain what I am going to ask you.

Among particular Truths, I place those which relate to Religion, and are revealed in the Scripture. Why do the same Truths, which,

which, when taken in a certain sense, give Men no pain, become insupportable to them, when viewed in another manner? I know some learned Men, who profess themselves never tired of the Study of Religion. The Beauties they discover in it charm them; but then they dare not consider it in a certain light, and they would take it very ill, were they forced to fix their Sight on it.

Eraſtus. Man can suffer nothing from the particular Truths of Religion, only as they contribute toward awakening in him the Testimony of Conscience or simple Truth. The most pressing Truths are Diversions to those who view them in a controversial or critical way. Hence arises a Diversity and Motion, which are of great service to one who dreads hearing the simple Language of Truth too distinctly. All the borrowed Ornaments which Men employ for giving, as they pretend, more Force to certain Truths, disfigure and weaken them, by drawing them out of their natural Simplicity.

Though, strictly speaking, only *primitive* and *universal Truth* is simple, yet particular Truths, as they proceed from the same Truth, have likewise in their Origin a sort of Simplicity, which unites them to simple Truth. By the natural Relation between them, one should be the Key to the rest; *simple* and *universal Truth* should be to *distinct Truths*, what Light is to Objects. Without losing any thing of its Simplicity, it discovers their

Diversity

Diverſity and Differences; it ſhews them ſuch as they are, provided they are not diſguiſed by any thing foreign to their Nature, and the Eye be free from all Obſtacles which may hinder it from ſeeing them.

Hence I conclude, that were the Truths of Religion diveſted of all thoſe Diſguiſes put on them by Men; were they preſented in their utmoſt Simplicity to Men, in whom Conſcience is not quite extinguiſhed, thoſe very particular Truths would naturally refer them to ſimple and univerſal Truth; as ſimple Truth would conduct them inſenſibly, and by degrees, to the diſtinct Knowledge of particular Truths.

Crito. I know not where I am, *Eraſtus*; methinks this is the firſt Day that I begin to have a glimpſe of Truth. Your Diſtinction between ſimple and univerſal Truth, and particular Truths, opens my Eyes to an Infinity of things. I ſee what made me ſo warm in the purſuit of what I called Truth.

Philo. I now underſtand why I reliſh'd certain Truths, which you explain'd in our Walks, while moſt of them gave me inexpreſſible pain. Thoſe which had a tendency to overthrow certain vulgar Opinions, certain common Practices, which are a ſort of Pedantry in Religion, gave me much pleaſure. But as you dwelt moſt on Truths which ſhocked me, by awakening a ſomething that condemn'd me, I have paſs'd my time but very indifferently.

Eraſtus.

Eraſtus. Dear *Philo*, you demonſtrate, by your own Experience, the Truth of what I juſt now ſaid concerning the Relation between particular Truths, and ſimple Truth, when they are preſented in a certain light, that is, ſimple in their way.

Philo. I think I underſtand you, *Eraſtus.* The Truth which regards the Exiſtence of Conſcience, is certainly one of the moſt ſimple, and what ought to refer us moſt directly to Conſcience itſelf. But had you diſcuſs'd the ſame Truth in a critical or controverſial manner, ſetting forth the different Opinions of Divines on that Subject, inſtead of feeling Pain, I ſhould have been well diverted with it, and perhaps more ſo than with any other Entertainment. But, as you refer me to what I feel and experience, and my Sentiment, being thus awakened, ſaid much more to me than your ſtrongeſt Expreſſions, I was tormented more than can be imagined.

Eraſtus. You would have ſuffered much leſs, *Philo*, had you yielded ſooner to the Teſtimony of Truth, which attack'd you both within and without at the ſame time.

However, the Correſpondence, which ſubſiſted in you, between thoſe two Teſtimonies, ſhews that their way was not obſtructed by very ſtrong Obſtacles. Thoſe who have raiſed almoſt unſurmountable Barricades between themſelves and Truth, feel leſs Pain for a time; but know not what Torment their Conduct will one day give them.

Philo. I have not forgot an Expreſſion, which you let fall on that Subject, in one of our Walks. The Subſtance of it was, that Truth will loſe none of its Rights; and that ſooner or later, in this Life, or in the next, we ſhall be obliged to reſtore all we have uſurp'd from it. I then experienced what you have ſaid to-day, that particular Truths, as they are ſimple, naturally and directly refer a Man to the ſimple Teſtimony of Truth. That Expreſſion ſent me immediately into myſelf, and I was ſo ſenſibly affected with the Truth of it, that I had no need to aſk you for Proofs of it.

Eraſtus. The moſt ſimple Truths are, by their Relation with the primitive Truth, ſo much above Proofs, that they appear doubtful only when Men attempt to prove them. *The bare Idea or Senſe we have of them, proves their Exiſtence.* Thus the Exiſtence of Conſcience is proved by its Language: it is heard; therefore it exiſts: its Teſtimony is invariably right; therefore it is infallible: its Teſtimony is infallible; therefore the particular Truths which it adopts are undoubted; and that purely becauſe they want no other Proofs.

Is this good Reaſoning? What ſay you, *Crito?* Have I any cauſe to regret the Expence I have been at in learning ſo fine a Science?

Crito. You are not yet acquainted with the greateſt Secrets of that Science, *Eraſtus*; and therefore you may regret your Expence.

The

The Truths which you have been proving, are in themselves so evident, that all the Syllogisms in the World can make no addition to them. The Art would lie in finding Arguments for Demonstration of the contrary. Yours amount to this: It is Day; therefore Light exists: I see that Light; therefore I have Eyes. I cannot doubt of what my Eyes see at Noon-day. Now they tell me I am in the Walks, and that *Eraſtus* and *Philo* are on each side of me; *ergo*, the thing is undoubted. I need no other Proofs. Pray tell me, *Eraſtus*, what is the great effect of this Argument? Have we now more Certainty than before, that it is Day, that Light exists, that we have Eyes, and that we are walking?

Eraſtus. The great Effect of this Argument is, that I have begun to doubt, whether it be Day, whether I have Eyes, and whether I am walking with *Crito* and *Philo?*

Crito. You see, therefore, dear *Eraſtus*, that your Skill is not great, when you undertake to prove only such Truths as are more evident in themselves than by all the Arguments that can be used. The Art would be to demonstrate, for example, that it is not Day at present, that we are not walking; and that, when our Eyes tell us we are, they deceive us.

Philo. In reality, what would be the Use of Syllogisms, if we were only to demonstrate that it is Day at Noon; and if they did not

furnish us with the Secret of proving clearly, that Black is White, and White Black? But, Raillery apart; it is good to have to deal with such refined Philosophers as *Crito*; he immediately understood the Tendency of *Eraſtus*'s Arguments, and then carried on the Jest at his ease. I own I am duller of Apprehension, and did not at first comprehend what *Eraſtus* would be at.

Eraſtus. It is evidently ridiculous to employ Arguments or Syllogisms, to demonstrate things, which have nothing doubtful in them, and to which Sense bears an incontestable Evidence. It is a mere Banter to undertake to prove to a Man who has good Eyes, that he is not blind; he knows more of the matter from his own Sense, than by the most demonstrative Proofs.

Philo. Men seem to have attempted to stifle the Sense of simple Truth, by the Crouds of Proofs and Arguments, which they have advanced for establishing certain particular Truths.

Eraſtus. Or rather, for establishing certain Opinions, to which they have given the Name of Truths, as appears from the Opposition and Contrariety of the same Opinions; whereas Truth cannot contradict itself.

Crito. Dear *Eraſtus*, this is a Syllogism in form; for the future you shall not be allowed to condemn the Use of them.

Eraſtus.

Eraſtus. If I fall into them without knowing it, *Crito*, how can I help it? However, I muſt tell you, that if I have appeared an Enemy to Syllogiſms or Arguments, it is not the Form that offends me, but the Uſe made of them for obſcuring the *True*, and giving a colour to the *Falſe*. By this Art the Doctors of each Sect have found means to give the moſt contrary Opinions the Face of Truth, which has made them paſs under that Name. Thus they have ſhewn, that Truth may be oppoſite to itſelf, and ſtill be Truth. Is not this a wonderful Art?

Philo. It ſeems that Truth has been an Apple of Diſcord among Men; a Subject of Diviſion, and the Occaſion of Battles more bloody than thoſe fought at the Siege of *Troy*.

Crito. In reality, it cannot be eaſily determined whether it has been more advantageous than diſadvantageous to them; and whether it had not been better .... Where are you, *Eraſtus?* Did you hear what *Philo* has been ſaying?

Eraſtus. I heard him ſo well, that his Words have thrown me into my *Reveries*; and I believe I ſhall be good for nothing elſe to-day.

Philo to *Crito.* That is as much as to ſay, we ſhall do well to retire, and let him muſe at his leiſure.

Eraſtus. You gueſs ſo well, dear *Philo*, that I have no reply to make.

Crito. Here we muſt do ourſelves Juſtice, with a good Grace, and without much Diſintereſtedneſs. *Eraſtus*'s *Reveries* have hitherto done us no harm; and how do we know . . . .

Philo. I underſtand you, *Crito*; and ſo let us go, without making any farther bargain.

DIALOGUE XII.

CRITO *and* PHILO.

Crito. DO you know, *Philo*, that our Friend did not lie in Town laſt Night? I ſent to his Houſe this Morning, and his Servant ſaid he had not ſeen him ſince yeſterday, that probably he was gone into the Country.

Philo. His *Reveries* may have carried him inſenſibly to *N*——'s Seat. He will not be allow'd to return ſoon. I ſhould be patient under the Loſs of his Company, if he would make us amends by communicating his *Reveries*.

Crito. Perhaps he has done that.—What will you ſay, *Philo*, if I gueſs'd right?

Philo. I ſhall ſay you have a mind to ſet up for a Conjurer; but I'll let you ſee I am as much ſo as you; for I imagine you play a ſure Game.

Crito,

Crito, taking a Letter out of his Pocket.] Here is a Letter, that was delivered to me, as I came out. Do you know that Hand?

Philo. It is *Eraſtus*'s; and, which is more, the Letter is directed to *Philo:* if you beg hard, I will communicate the Contents of it to you.

Crito. You would not be very well pleaſed, *Philo*, with keeping it to your ſelf. Shall I read it?

Philo. With all my heart, *Crito*; but we muſt retire into the Shade. There is a Bench ſhelter'd from the Sun.

They ſit down, and Crito *reads.*

A LETTER from *Eraſtus* to *Crito.*

" SInce you gave occaſion to my Reveries, " *Philo*, you ſhall be plagued with them. " You laugh at the Penance; but perhaps " it will not prove ſo eaſy as you imagine. " How do you know whether, while I am " in my *Reveries*, I may not carry you into " ſome deſolate Country, or ſome Labyrinth, " out of which you will not eaſily find your " way? If ſo, blame only your ſelf, or your " Compariſon of the Apple of Diſcord, ſince " that gave birth to my *Reveries*.

" I ſhall not tell you that they led me in- " ſenſibly to *N*——'s Country-Houſe, where " I am at preſent. They have made me " take another Road, which I will trace out

" to you, if I can. You shall then tell me " whether you are in the humour of bearing " me company.

" At first I found my self in a Labyrinth, " when I was considering Truth under the " Emblem of the Apple of Discord, as the " Cause of all the Debates, Divisions, and " endless Contests, which reign among Men. " What is Truth? said I: Is it a Good, or " an Evil? Can the World dispense with its " absence? Can it even subsist without it? " And would not the Idea of a World with- " out Truth be an Idea of a Chaos? But, " once more, What is Truth? Here I recol- " lected the Distinction we made yesterday " between simple, universal Truth, which is " *one*; and distinct or particular Truths, " which are *many*. I found this Distinction " might be of great use in several respects; " but that, in a certain Light, it was still " imperfect, or stood in need of some Ex- " planation. I thought that, at the bottom, " distinct Truths were of so different a nature " from simple Truth, that they could not be " called by the same Name.

" It must be acknowledged, our Language " is so barren of Expressions, that we are " often obliged to employ the same Terms " for expressing things very different.

" For example, what two things are more " different than *simple, universal Truth*, liv- " ing, eternal Truth, the Source of all Truth,

" is

" is from a Fact, done at ſuch a Time, in
" ſuch a Place, and attended with ſuch Cir-
" cumſtances, which is called Truth? Men
" give the ſame Name to the different Senſes
" they pretend to find in the Scripture. E-
" very one adheres to that which he has
" adopted, defends it, and ſupports it as the
" only one that is paſſable, excluſive of all
" the oppoſite Senſes. Should not the word
" *Opinion* be here uſed in its place? This
" will appear, if we conſider that, among
" thoſe oppoſite Senſes, ſome are infallibly
" falſe, and perhaps more ſo than are true:
" They may therefore be term'd true or
" falſe, as taken in general. Men talk of
" true or falſe Opinions; but they never
" think of ſpeaking true or falſe Truths.

" Truth is always Truth. If what has ap-
" peared to us true at one time, appears
" falſe at another, we do not ſay that Truth
" is become falſe; but that we miſtook
" Falſhood for Truth.

" Truth then remains always invariable.
" It is never oppoſite to itſelf; what it was
" yeſterday, it is to-day. On that foot, is
" it the Apple of Diſcord? or is that Appel-
" lation due to the Opinions, which Men
" have graced with the Name of Truth?
" Here certainly is the Explanation of the
" Riddle; and plain good Senſe cannot diſ-
" own it. That alone tells us, no one can
" give what he has not: that Light cannot

" produce Darkneſs: that what is ſimple and " uniform cannot produce Diviſion and Con- " trariety. Thus Truth is clear'd of the " Diſorders, which it has ſeem'd to cauſe a- " mong Men; and at the ſame time Men " may be undeceived as to the Paſſion they " have ſeem'd to entertain for Truth. Here " is a Key, which opens one of the Doors of " the Labyrinth; but yet we are not quite " out of it; freſh Difficulties are to be ſur- " mounted; and this among others.

" Has not God manifeſted the Truth to " Mankind in the Holy Scripture? And is " it from the Scripture that Men have drawn " thoſe oppoſite Opinions, which have pro- " duced endleſs Conteſts? This being grant- " ed, the Scripture has been to them a real " Apple of Diſcord. But the Holy Scrip- " ture is Truth; therefore what may be a- " ſcribed to the Holy Scripture, may be a- " ſcribed to Truth.

" Men are fond of the Opinions they have " embraced: they have found them in the " Holy Scripture; the Holy Scripture is " Truth; therefore Men are fond of Truth. " Theſe now are very ſtrong Arguments; " I would endeavour to anſwer them, was I " not ſeized with a Drowſineſs ſtill more " ſtrong, to which I am abſolutely obliged " to yield. I reſerve the Remainder of my " *Reveries* till to-morrow. If I do not give " you them in Writing, perhaps you may " have them in the Walks." *Crito.*

Crito. Well, *Philo*, what ſay you to our Friend's *Reveries?*

Here Eraſtus *comes, hides himſelf behind a Tree, and liſtens to the Diſcourſe.*

Philo. I ſay he had good reaſon to make me expect they would lead me into a Labyrinth, out of which I ſhould not eaſily find my way. But I think him a little malicious, for carrying us in, and then leaving us to get out as well as we can. If I write to him, I ſhall rattle him off to ſome purpoſe.

Crito. You are reſolved to be angry in your turn then, *Philo*; and do not obſerve that *Eraſtus* has already done you a ſignal piece of Service, in diſengaging you from the Embaraſſment into which you had brought him by your Objection about the Apple of Diſcord. He only cou'd have clear'd up the matter.

Philo. I condemn myſelf, dear *Crito*, and perceive I am coming into a good humour again. My Impatience to hear an Anſwer to the Arguments, with which he concludes his Letter, had put me into an ill one. I believe, if he does not return to-day, I ſhall be tempted to go to him.

Eraſtus, (*without being ſeen.*) Do you want a conveniency for carrying you thither?

Philo. Is it a Spirit we hear?

Crito. Whence came that Voice? We muſt arm ourſelves with Courage.

Eraſtus, appearing. Without doubt, ſince it is the Voice of a Magician.

Philo. Be as much a Magician as you pleaſe, we are not much afraid of you; but who would have ventured to hope to ſee you here to-day? I was apprehenſive that *N*——— would detain you ſeveral days longer.

Eraſtus. He would have done ſo, had it been in his power; but I made my eſcape without aſking leave. I went thither in a *Reverie*, I left the Houſe in a *Reverie*, and meet you here at the time appointed, to———

Crito. Do you know, *Eraſtus*, that *Philo* was in a great paſſion with you, ſome moments ago?

Eraſtus. In quality of a Magician, I have had information of it; and came to offer him all the Aſſiſtance in my power, for getting out of the Labyrinth, in which I had left him.

Philo. I charged you with a little Malice, dear *Eraſtus*; but I ſee it was none of the blackeſt, any more than the Magic which enables you to gueſs ſo exactly. You have without doubt brought the Sequel of your *Reveries.*

Eraſtus. I am too much a Man of my Word to fail in that Point. To prevent their eſcape, I have made no ſcruple of committing them to as cloſe a Priſon as I did our two *Jews.* I ſhall deliver them into your hands, that you may make what uſe of them you pleaſe.

Philo.

Philo. I think that will be to read them; and that we have time enough for doing ſo.

He reads.

" In reply to the Arguments propoſed, I " ſay firſt, that the Holy Scripture is, pro- " perly ſpeaking, not Truth, but a Teſti- " mony of Truth. This Teſtimony is ex- " preſs'd in Words ſuſceptible of different " Senſes; every Man has there found a " Senſe ſuitable to his Paſſions or Prejudices. " The Prejudices and Paſſions of Men, be- " ing always oppoſite, have produced Divi- " ſion by the oppoſite Opinions, which pro- " ceed from them. Here now is the Apple " of Diſcord. If the Scripture has been the " Cauſe of ſuch Diſcord, as it cannot be de- " nied, is Truth anſwerable for it? All that " may be attributed to the Scripture, cannot " in every ſenſe be aſcribed to Truth. If " Men are fond of Opinions, which they " have drawn from the Scripture, it doth not " thence follow that they are fond of Truth. " Such Opinions are their own Work, the " Fruit of their own Penetration and Diſcern- " ment; they depend on the particular Senſe " which Men have fixed to ſuch or ſuch Paſ- " ſages of Scripture. That particular Senſe " appeared to them moſt proper for ſupport- " ing their Party in oppoſition to all others. " They would be mortified if Truth ſhould " detect the Falſity of it. On that foot, of

" what are they fond? Of Truth, or of " themselves?"

Philo. Here now is enough for undeceiving Men, in regard to their pretended Passion for Truth. And I must own that, till now, I have loved only the Shadow and Appearances of it; and begin to believe no Character so uncommon in the World as that of a sincere Lover of Truth.

Eraſtus. But, dear *Philo*, where shall we find such an one? A Man who sets no limits to Truth, makes no resistance, but is willing to receive it at all hazards, and in what manner soever it may present itself; a Man, who, when he gets a glimpse of it, will not enquire, before he allows it Entrance, whether it reproves or applauds him, whether it opposes, or chimes in with his own Opinions and Inclinations; whether it may not disconcert the Plans he has formed; in short, whether it may not prejudice his temporal Interest, his Reputation or his Fortune: a Man, I say, who, without debating on the Matter, should open all Passages to Truth, would be a Phenix in his kind.

Philo. I think I know one, whom this Picture resembles.

Eraſtus. I perceive you have *Eraſtus* in view. Be pleased to remember that this Picture is very different from what he drew of himself some days ago. Let me refer you to

to it *. I will add, without the leaſt Affectation of Modeſty, that I ſo often catch myſelf in a ſecret Oppoſition to Truth, whenſoever it oppoſes my Inclinations, that there is no need of Arguments for proving it.

Philo. If my Lady *Modeſty* had not loſt all Credit with you, I ſhould have been ready to place her here; but you have unluckily ſhut her out. Do you know that I frequently bewail her Abſence? For example, when I am obliged to believe my Friends literally in what they ſpeak to their own diſadvantage; and much more, when I perceive I ſhall be believ'd in what I may ſay of my ſelf in the ſame way; and that no Abatement will be made, in order to place it to the Account of Modeſty: Is not this very mortifying? And is ſhe not very ſerviceable to ſuch as admit her into their Company? They may lay what they pleaſe on her; not to ſay, that ſhe is of uſe for keeping up Converſation, which would be ſoon exhauſted, if Truth alone was admitted.

Crito. Now you ſpeak of Truth, ſhall we go on with *Eraſtus*'s *Reveries?* Where did we leave off?

Philo. I had finiſhed the Article, in which it is proved that Men, inſtead of being fond of Truth, are fond of their own Works, and of the Opinions they have framed. He proceeds thus:

"I

* Dialogue IX.

" I may be called on to prove what I have " advanced, *viz.* that all that may be said of " Truth cannot be justly applied to the Scrip- " ture; and that, on the contrary, what may " be said of the Scripture cannot be apply'd " to Truth. What difference do you make " between them? I ask in my turn, what " difference is there between a Testimony " given in favour of a Person and the Person " himself; between a Dissertation on Light " and Light itself? Such is the difference be- " tween the Scripture and Truth. The " former is a Testimony in favour of the " latter; but it cannot be called Truth, un- " less the Term be taken in an improper " sense, as *Serenus* understood it the other " day of a Manuscript, which treats of the " Stars. He ask'd *L*... if he had brought " the Stars. This way of speaking never " deceives any Man in things that fall under " the cognizance of the Senses. A Book " which should contain the Picture of a " Prince, his History, the Form of his Go- " vernment, *&c.* was never taken for the " Prince himself; and you may say as often " as you please, that you have *Lewis* XIV. " in your Pocket, without exciting Laughter.

" But the Case is not the same, in regard " to Truth. Men have insensibly fallen into " Mistakes: They have made the Testimony " stand for Truth itself: they have persuaded " themselves that being perfect Masters of

" the

" the Scripture, as their Phrase is, is being " Masters of Truth: they have called it the " Light, the infallible Guide; in a word, " pure Truth. They have stopt at the Te- " stimony, and thus render'd it useless, and " hinder'd its effect; nay more, they have " actually turn'd it against themselves. Our " Saviour, for example, tells the *Jews* that " *the Scriptures testified of him; but that they* " *would not come to him, to have Life.*

" To what purpose is a Testimony, of " which Men will make no use? It only " serves to condemn those, who profess to " receive it. *Moses, in whom you place your* " *hope, will condemn you.*

" The Holy Scripture is in regard to " Truth what *John* the Baptist was to *Jesus.* " We read that St. *John* was not the Light, " but was sent to bear witness of the Light. " This gives us a compleat Idea of the Rela- " tion between the Holy Scripture and " Truth, and at the same time shews the " difference between them.

" Truth consider'd under the Emblem of " Light, employ'd me a long time in my " *Reveries.* I found natural Light a visible " Representation of Truth or spiritual Light; " and that what the former is in regard to " Bodies and sensible Objects, the latter is, " in a very eminent degree, in regard to " Spirits and invisible Objects: that there is " no other difference between those two

" Lights

" Lights than what ought neceſſarily to ſub-
" ſiſt between the Copy and the Original;
" between a material and ſpiritual Being;
" between a Being void of Underſtanding or
" Life, and a living intelligent Being; be-
" tween a created and an uncreated Being.
" That in other reſpects, their Properties and
" Effects are exactly the ſame in regard to
" their proper Subjects. But it will be aſk-
" ed, Is Truth uncreated? Can that Epithet
" be applied to any but GOD?

" I aſk in my turn, whether ſimple, pri-
" mitive Truth has any Beginning: whether
" there ever was a time when it did not
" exiſt, and if it is poſſible to ſeparate it
" from the Divinity one Moment; or whe-
" ther the Idea of the Divinity and that of
" Truth are not inſeparably connected? I
" think no Man will diſpute this; it is there-
" fore inconteſtable that ſimple Truth has
" always exiſted in God, and in nothing
" differs from God himſelf.

" Here the diſtinction, we made yeſterday
" between *ſimple* or *univerſal Truth*, and
" *diſtinct* or *particular Truths*, takes place.
" It ſhews us the difference between created
" Truths and uncreated Truth. The latter
" is *one*, *ſimple* and *univerſal:* the former are
" *many*, *diſtinct* and *limited*. Was I talking
" to ſtupid Perſons, I ſhould here explain how
" the Idea of Simplicity, Univerſality and
" Unity are inſeparably connected."

Philo,

Philo. I am ſtupid enough, dear *Eraſtus*, to own I ſhould be pleaſed with ſuch an Explanation.

Eraſtus. You are unlucky, *Philo*; you give yourſelf the Character of Stupidity, only to make me talk of things which you know better than I do. Were you a Child, I wou'd tell you that what is *univerſal* is *one*; becauſe there cannot be two univerſal Beings: for if they were two, each wou'd be a particular Being, not the univerſal Being.

If Univerſality and Unity are inſeparable, Simplicity is not leſs ſo from both. What is ſimple, muſt be univerſal; otherwiſe it would not be ſimple. What is not compoſed of ſeveral Parts, is one: what is one, is ſimple. We have demonſtrated that what is one is univerſal. *Ergo*, what is ſimple is univerſal, and one; as what is one, is ſimple and univerſal.

Well, Gentlemen Banterers, need I go any farther? How they laugh in their ſleeve at having made me deal in *Ergo's* in ſpite of my teeth!

Philo. This is juſt what we deſired of you, *Eraſtus*; methinks, with all your Averſion to Syllogiſms, you know well enough how to make your advantage of them.

Eraſtus. A wonderful advantage, to be able to demonſtrate, by a Set of Syllogiſms, ſuch things as are obvious to every Man's Eyes, as ſoon as he will open them.

Crito. Let us go on with our *Reveries*; give me them, *Philo*, I will read in my turn.

Eraſtus.

Eraſtus. I think we had better reſerve the ſequel for to-morrow, and at preſent think of walking to Town.

Crito. I will put the *Reveries* in my Pocket then. I ſee *Philo*'s Jealouſy; but with his leave, he ſhall be ſatisfied with the beginning of them. I ſhall not now part with what I have; it is enough that I promiſe to give a good Account of them to-morrow.

DIALOGUE XIII.

CRITO, PHILO, and ERASTUS.

Crito. I Have waited here half an hour with the *Reveries* in my hand. You imagine, perhaps, that I was very impatient for your coming; but indeed I was not; I found the loſs of your Company ſufficiently made up to me by the Pleaſure that——

Philo. A very obliging Speech truly! To prefer the *Reveries* of your Friends to your Friends themſelves.

Eraſtus. More obliging than you imagine, *Philo*; my Self-Love is not leſs agreeably flatter'd by the Reception, which *Crito* gives my *Reveries*, than by what he wou'd give my Perſon.

Philo. You are always talking of your Self-Love; one wou'd think you made it your buſineſs to perſuade us you are influenced by that Paſſion in all you do.

Eraſtus.

Eraſtus. *Philo* is always entertaining fine Ideas of me. I wou'd fain know which is moſt to my Commendation; to deceive you to my own advantage, or to my diſadvantage; that you ſhould think me better or worſe than I am.

Philo. A pleaſant Queſtion! If you allow us to appeal to the Voices, or rather the Practice of all honeſt Men, you will find it immediately decided, that it is infinitely better to deceive Men to our advantage than to our diſadvantage, and appear better than we are rather than worſe. If the Queſtion is to be decided by the Number or Plurality of Voices, *Eraſtus*, you are condemned, ſince you maintain it wou'd be better for you to appear a leſs honeſt Man than you are.

Eraſtus. The unanimous concurrence to the Deciſion, wou'd ſhew how much Credit Truth has in the World.

Crito. The advantage of being applauded or eſteem'd will excuſe us, if we ſometimes make free with it.

Philo. But are you not apprehenſive, *Eraſtus*, of injuring Truth, by appearing leſs good than you are?

Eraſtus. The hazard is not conſiderable on that ſide, dear *Philo*; and I am very ſenſible that whatever I ſay, you will always think me better or leſs bad than I am. I muſt tell you, however, that I have no fix'd deſign of deceiving you, to my own diſadvantage; I only

only intended to let you know, that if that could happen, and if, while I acted naturally, I ſhould give you room to think me worſe than I am; I ſhould run leſs hazard by ſo doing, than if by acting leſs naturally I gave you room to ſuppoſe me better than I am. Will you know the reaſon? It is, becauſe in the former caſe Truth wou'd ſooner or later undeceive you; and in the mean time, I ſhould make my advantage of your Miſtake. Whereas the caſe wou'd not be the ſame on the other ſide, as I ſhould give occaſion to your Miſtake, by offending againſt Sincerity or Truth; which wou'd be revenged on me, by humbling me in proportion to the falſe Elevation, to which I aſpir'd. By undeceiving you in that Point, it wou'd give me the utmoſt Confuſion.

Crito. Dear *Eraſtus*, you have now given me a glimpſe of more Truths than you have explain'd. You frequently have the other World in view, when you are ſpeaking of Truth, and the Reſtitutions we ſhall be oblig'd to make to it ſooner or later. But is there no way of knowing what Idea you have of that other World? You talk of it ſo familiarly, that one wou'd think you have a Correſpondence there.

Philo. I have often had the ſame Queſtion at my Tongue's-end.

Eraſtus. Would you have me, in quality of a Magician, raiſe ſome Spirit from thence?

If

If ſo, you muſt tell me of what Colour you wou'd have it.

Crito. I perceive that, in quality of a Magician, you want to get rid of us; but you ſhall not eſcape this time. As much a Magician as you are, you ſhall give us a direct and plain Anſwer.

Eraſtus. You will excuſe me anſwering you to-day, dear *Crito*, if I promiſe you on the Word of an honeſt Magician, to put a Manuſcript into your hands, that will give you more ſatisfaction than I can.

Crito. Shall we allow him quarter on theſe Terms, *Philo?*

Philo. Yes; provided it be not ſomething we have ſeen already.

Eraſtus. Have you ſeen a Manuſcript, entitled, "Various Sentiments of ſome Divines "concerning the State of Souls ſeparated "from their Bodies, in fourteen Letters?"

Philo. I have ſeen nothing of that ſort.

Crito. Nor I.

Philo. Let us take his Word, *Crito*; and in the mean time, return to our *Reveries:* They are in your hands. Shall I read them? Where did we leave off yeſterday?

He reads. *Crito.* I have the Place.

"Uncreated Truth is *one*, *ſimple* and *uni-*
"*verſal.* Created Truths are *ſeveral*, *diſtinct*
"and *bounded.* Here again, the Similitude
"of Light takes place; which, without
"loſing

" losing any thing of its Simplicity, discovers " an Infinity of different Objects.

" The Diversity of Objects, which Light " exposes to view, is an Emblem of the Di- " versity of particular Truths. Simple " Truth discovers them in their true Light. " That only shews their true Distinction and " Relations.

" As the Objects, display'd by the Light, " are very different from Light itself; so " distinct or particular Truths manifested by " simple Truth, are very different from sim- " ple Truth itself. We observ'd yesterday, " that particular Truths are relative to Crea- " tures: that some of them are referred to " inanimate and irrational Creatures, and o- " thers to intelligent Beings.

" The first of these Truths are called *Phy-* " *sical:* the second *Moral.* Physical Truth " falls partly under the Cognizance of the " Senses, and partly under that of Reasoning. " What we know of them by Sense or Expe- " rience is not doubtful or ambiguous; what " we know of them by way of Reasoning, " varies *ad infinitum.*"

Erastus. Stop one moment, if you please, *Crito.* We are not here disputing in a philosophical manner, concerning the Nature of Objects, which are known by the Evidence of the Senses, but concerning the Effect or Impression made by the same Objects on the Sentiment;

Sentiment; an Impreſſion which never varies. It is to no purpoſe for Men, to pretend to demonſtrate by Reaſoning that Fire is not hot, Honey not ſweet, Snow not white, *&c.* The Queſtion is not, I ſay, whether Fire is hot; but whether the Impreſſion, which I receive from it, is not invariably the ſame; whether, for example, there be any doubt that on putting my hand into the Fire, I ſhall feel what is called Burning. As I ſpeak to Philoſophers, I am obliged to prevent ſuch Objections, as they might make in that Character; and appriſe them they have to do, not with a Naturaliſt, but a *Reveur*, who is telling his *Reveries*. They wou'd get no honour by engaging with him; as a *Reveur* who does not love fighting, he wou'd ſoon quit the Field. Now, *Crito*, you may go on, when you pleaſe.

Crito. Here is a *Reveur*, who thinks he may take all manner of Liberties, and even that of bantering the poor Philoſophers. He ſhould not come off ſo, were I not afraid of interrupting our Reading.

He reads.

" *Moral Truths* are of a nature relative to that of a free and intelligent Being. They tend to let him know what he is, and whence he derives his Origin; the end of his Creation, and the means he is to take for arriving at, and attaining it.

" The

" The ſame Truths, more detailed and " particularized, help him to perceive the " Obſtacles in his way to that end; and at " the ſame time, point out the Road he is to " take, and the moſt proper means for ſur- " mounting thoſe Obſtacles.

" Theſe Truths re-unite or comprehend " all that can be called *Religion.* By that " Term I underſtand, not only what has " been revealed to Men in the Law or the " Goſpel; but what is termed *Natural Re-* " *ligion*; ſuch Truths as Men might have " known without, by the Teſtimony of Na- " ture, and within by that of Conſcience.

" This is the Foundation of the Chriſtian " Religion; Chriſtianity adds nothing to it, " as to the Subſtance and eſſential part; but " ſerves to explain it, and ſhew Men the " uſe they may make of it. It, in a particu- " lar manner, manifeſts the deſigns of the " Creator over his Creatures, the Love he " has for them, and the Proofs he has given " them of that Affection. It affords ſenſible " Proofs or Teſtimonies of all this. Theſe " are publick Facts, Examples, Miracles, and " Precepts explain'd. Such Particularities " may be termed *diſtinct*, or *particular* " Truths.

" Theſe Truths have been communicated " to us in the Writings of Perſons choſen by " God for that purpoſe: who teſtify what " they have ſeen or heard. Such is the Idea

" they

" they give us of their own Writings; and " this demonſtrates the Truth of what we " have advanced, *That the Scripture is not* " *Truth, but an Evidence of Truth.* I add, " that, as the Men, who have given this E- " vidence, were inſpired, or directed by God " in what they wrote, we may call the Scrip- " ture an exteriour or indirect Evidence, " which Truth gives of itſelf."

Philo. I find that what has been read, by re-uniting Religion almoſt into a Point, places it in a Light very different from that given it by thoſe Diviſions and Subdiviſions, by which it is uſually deſcrib'd.

Crito. Do you not likewiſe obſerve, that by this Re-union, we diſcover a diſtinction of three things, commonly confounded together, by being equally called Truth: *The Holy Scripture, particular Truths, and univerſal Truth.*

Eraſtus. Nothing diſtinguiſhes Objects better than what re-unites them. When a Man has once found the Center, he will be eaſily carried, by the ſeveral Lines, to the Circumference. But thoſe who reſt ſatisfied with running round the Circumference, and examining each Line ſeparately, may deſcribe the Surface of the Circle without ever coming to the Center.

Truth is the Center and Soul of Religion; no Man will venture to diſpute it. But what

Idea do we form of this Soul? An Idea of ſomething inanimate, of one or more Truths, to be learnt, believ'd and conſider'd ſeparately; ſome deſign'd for Speculation, others for Practice. This is the Idea, Men frame of Religion, and Truth, which is the Soul of it; or rather of the Truths, which are ſo many Souls of it: for if Truth is not *one*, and Religion is compoſed of ſeveral Truths independent one of the other, it muſt have ſeveral Souls, and at the ſame time ſeveral Centers.

Philo. This Compariſon explains a great Number of things. It ſhews how ridiculous the Ideas are, which the generality of Mankind entertain of Religion or Truth. I now underſtand why Truth has hitherto given me the ſlip, even when I imagined myſelf moſt ſecure of it. I contented myſelf with ſome of its Branches only.

Eraſtus. You have hit the Nail on the head. The Branches of a Tree, ſeparated from the Trunk, belong to the Tree no longer; becauſe they ceaſe to partake of the Sap. Particular Truths, ſeparated from ſimple Truth, ceaſe to belong to Truth, as they no longer partake of the Life of it. As ſoon as they ceaſe to belong to Truth, they belong to each particular Perſon who makes them his own; as the Branches ſeparated from the Trunk, by ceaſing to belong to it, belong to him, who has plucked them. He may indeed handle his Branches, give them what form

form he pleaſes, and make very pretty Curioſities with them, which will place his Skill and Art in an advantageous Light. This has been the practice of Men in regard to Truth, and the Branches they have pluck'd from it. They have handled them freely: they have work'd them into all manner of Shapes at pleaſure: they have gain'd the Admiration of the World by the dexterity of their Wit, and the delicacy of their Genius, diſplay'd in the Turn, the Form, and Variety which they have given to ſuch common Truths.

They have ſtill been called Truths, as the aforeſaid Works retain the Name of Walnut-Tree or Olive.

But what do Men admire in thoſe Works? And what is the Deſign of the Artiſt? Is it to make the Wood be admired; or the Art employed in working it? What is admired in a fine Treatiſe? And what doth the Author deſign we ſhall admire in it? Is it the Truth, of which he treats, conſider'd in itſelf; or the manner in which he treats of it; the Turn, the Form, the Delicacy, in a word, the Sublimeneſs of his Genius? For your Satisfaction, tell him you have a reliſh for the ſame Truth, ſeparately from his Book, and you will ſee how he will receive you. You will paſs, in his opinion, for a Man of as good a taſte, as I ſhould in the opinion of an Artiſt, on telling him I ſet as much value on a

rough Branch of a Walnut-Tree, as on the beſt of his Works.

I ſhould indeed be in the wrong, if I ſet no value on Works ſo curiouſly finiſh'd; as I ſhould be unjuſt, to an ingenious Author, if I had no regard for the Turn and Graces he might give to what he calls Truth. Each of thoſe Works may have its uſe; the former may amuſe Children; the latter, Men of Senſe.

In order to give every thing its true Name; let us call the Branches pluck'd from the Walnut-Tree, *dry Wood*; and the Branches of Truth, ſeparated from univerſal Truth, *Opinions*.

Crito. May it not be added, that of thoſe Branches, on which Men have beſtow'd the Appellation of Truths, they have made little Idols, and offer'd Incenſe to them; unleſs it wou'd be more proper to ſay, they have paid that Compliment to the Skill ſhewn in the Form given them. Every one has ſet a price on his own Performance, has given it a fine Name, into which that of Truth has always been foiſted. Methinks, the Name of Truth is at preſent in each Sect, what *Diana* of the *Epheſians* was at *Epheſus* in St. *Paul*'s time.

Eraſtus. Conſequently, woe be to him, who ſhould attempt to diſcredit the ingenious Works, which the Artiſts of each Sect make in honour of it. But where are our *Reveries* carrying us?

Crito.

Crito. Shall I go on, *Eraſtus?*

Eraſtus. With all my heart, if you think it not too late.

Crito. We have time enough.

He reads:

"Here then the whole of Religion is "re-united in one Point: that Point is "Truth: ſimple Truth is its Center: par- "ticular Truths are its Lines and Circum- "ference.

"Particular Truths are of two ſorts; "ſome are inſeparable from ſimple Truth: "others are of a different nature, and may "be ſeparated from it. The former depend "directly on ſimple Truth, as the Rays de- "pend on the Sun: the latter are like the "Objects, which the Light ſhews, and there- "fore of a different nature from Light.

"By this laſt kind of Truths, I under- "ſtand Hiſtorical Facts, and the Circum- "ſtances relating to them; ſuch as the Hi- "ſtories deliver'd in the Old and New Teſta- "ment. I ſhould think the Term of *True* "wou'd ſuit theſe better than that of *Truth.*

"But it will be aſk'd, Where lies the dif- "ference between *Truth* and the *True?* In "this, that the *True* doth not exiſt of itſelf; "that, properly ſpeaking, it has no Being "exiſting or ſubſiſting; but is always rela- "tive to ſome particular Thing, to ſome "Fact, to ſome Circumſtance, or to the

" Connexion of Things." This explains itſelf.

Crito ſpeaks.

It is true that . . . . . By this Expreſſion I confirm what you have juſt now laid down. The Word *True*, pronounced alone ſignifies nothing. I am aſk'd immediately, what is *True?* Whether it be a Fact, or ſomething ſaid, or the Relation between one Circumſtance and another. So that it is eaſy to conceive that *True* and *Truth* are not one and the ſame thing.

He reads:

" Truth exiſts of itſelf: it is the Origin of " the *True*. There is an Infinity of true " things; but only one Truth; I ſpeak of " ſimple and primitive Truth. Truth ought " to be deciſive in regard to what is true, " that is, ought to diſtinguiſh it from what " is *Falſe*, as the Light of the Sun enables " us to diſtinguiſh the true from the falſe, " in the Objects it ſhews. This is what I " underſtand by particular Truths, which are " of a different nature from ſimple Truth, " and to which I think the word *True* wou'd " be more ſuitable than that of *Truth*.

" I now return to thoſe particular " Truths, which I ſaid were inſeparable from " ſimple Truth, and which depend on it as " directly as the Rays depend on the Sun. " In order to form the better Judgment of

" the

" the Circumference, we must view it round
" from the Center.

" Truth in its Center, *uncreated*, *simple*,
" *universal* Truth, differs in nothing from
" God himself, as I said before. Though
" God is *one* and *simple*, his Attributes are,
" or appear to us, *many* and *different* one
" from another; as Light, which is one and
" simple, seems divided into an Infinity of
" Rays, which appear distinct one from an-
" other.

" Were I a Natural Philosopher, I wou'd
" say that Light seems divided into several
" Rays, only by the Limits it meets with,
" and its manner of reflecting on the Eye.
" Without determining whether this is true
" or not, in regard to natural or visible
" Light, let us return to spiritual or invi-
" sible Light, of which that is no more than
" the Copy; and we may safely say, that all
" is *one* in God, though his Attributes seem
" to us different.

" In order to explain this Proposition, we
" must consider Light two ways; as a *Cause*,
" and as an *Object*. As a *Cause*, it is inva-
" riably *one*; and this is what we called simple
" Truth. As an *Object*, it appears to our
" Eyes divided into several Rays, and this is
" what we termed particular Truths, which
" depend directly on simple Truth.

" These particular Truths, like Lines
" drawn from the Center, are all we know

" of the Attributes of Divinity: all that can " be consider'd in it separately and distinctly; " as *Power*, *Wisdom*, *Goodness*, *Justice*, and " *Truth*. I speak of *Truth*, as an Attribute " or Object, not as a Cause; because in that " respect, Truth is the Center where all the " Attributes meet.

" The Attributes just now mention'd, are " such as are most distinct to our View; be- " cause God has by them manifested himself " to intelligent Creatures in a more particular " manner, than by his most simple Attri- " butes; which are naturally so indivisible, " that we can distinguish them from the " Center of simple Truth only as Objects.

" By this kind of Attributes, I mean *Eter-* " *nity*, *Unity*, *Infinity*, *Immutability*, and " others of the same nature, which cannot be " view'd distinctly, but as the Lines in the " Point where they cease to be such, and be- " come a Center.

" Thus it appears how all Religion is re- " united in the single Point of Truth; and " how what we call *distinct* or *particular* " Truths, result from this single Point, " which is the Center.

" But in what Class shall we place the " Holy Scriptures? In that which is proper " for them in quality of an *Evidence of Truth*. " In that quality they will be a lively De- " scription of the Center, the Circumference, " and the Lines which pass from one to the

" other.

" other. Round the Circumference will ap-
" pear the several Histories of Men of all
" times, their different Conduct in relation
" to the Center, and what they have done in
" order to keep at a distance from it, or to
" approach it.

" This is all that can be required of an
" *Evidence*, and this is what the Scriptures
" paint to the Life. They describe it as spi-
" ritual Objects can be describ'd; that is, by
" such Expressions as represent invisible Ob-
" jects, in the same manner that material
" Colours represent visible Objects.

" But I may be called on to explain what
" I have advanced; *that the Scriptures are*
" *an Evidence, which Truth gives of itself*
" *without, or indirectly.* This is easy; and
" to keep close to the Comparison of a Pic-
" ture, those who drew this, had the Origi-
" nal before them: They could not give
" Evidence of the Light, but as they them-
" selves were enlighten'd: They testify only
" what they have seen and heard. Truth,
" when it was revealed to them directly, was
" the Cause or Principle of their Evidence;
" but the Evidence which Truth gives of it-
" self, by the Organs it chuses, is only indi-
" rect in regard to other Men. It is an ex-
" teriour Evidence, or a coarse Image of
" Truth; an Image which can be of no use,
" but as it refers every one to the Original,

" to the direct Evidence of simple Truth, or " Conscience, which is its Echo.

" Is not this sufficient for *Reveries?* At " least, it is all I can think of at present; " and *Crito* and *Philo* must be satisfied with " this, under the penalty of making such " additions to it as they shall think proper."

Crito. Here is a Sample of *Reveries*, which might afford one Matter for some time.

Philo. Were we as good *Reveurs* as *Eraſtus*, this would carry us very far. I must desire him to tell me his Secret.

Eraſtus. I believe you have a mind to make me Professor of *Reveries*. I perceive I must hasten my Departure, or you will oblige me to play the forced Physician. You have already extorted much more from me than was proper. It happens unluckily for me, that you have pocketed them, so that I cannot take them back. While they were reading, I could not forgive myself for speaking in a manner, which so ill becomes a *Reveur*, talking to Philosophers. The worst is, that a *Reveur* cannot assign a Reason for his *Reveries*; he gives them for what they are, without troubling himself to justify or defend them.

Philo. The Thought of your leaving us is really shocking. I am now very serious. Do you remember, *Crito*; that, before *Eraſtus* went into the Country, I pretended to be very sorry for his Departure? I own at that time

time I had a secret Pleasure at his going; not only that I might be secure from the Reproaches which my Conscience frequently made me in our Walks; but also stop the rapid Progress, which I observed you made with him, and of which I was extremely jealous.

Crito. I found you full of Resignation, *Philo*, at our Friend's Departure; but did not imagine you quite so easy under the Loss. The wise World is very artful. It makes its advantage of every thing: it takes a pride in, at the same time, expressing a Concern for a Friend, and being courageous enough to bear his Absence. This Stroke ought to be added to the Picture, which *Erastus* drew of the wise World. But I remember it is there already.

Philo. You dare not go on and tell me it is contain'd in *Erastus*'s Account of Hypocrisy, Double Dealing and Jealousy. Speak out boldly, *Crito*; be not so apprehensive of offending me; I am not quite so captious now, as I was then.

Crito. We have had *Erastus*'s *Reveries* since that time. They have in a little time made a considerable progress in *Philo*'s Mind. They must have some weight with him, to cause so great a Change in his Language.

Philo. And I am very well pleas'd with having given occasion to them. I am caught by the very Endeavours I made to guard

againſt them. The Objections which I ſtarted in oppoſition to the Language of Conſcience, or to render it ſuſpected, made me ſenſible I had one; that its Language was not to be deſpiſed, and that ſuch a Contempt would not always eſcape with impunity.

The Letters, or *Reveries* of *Eraſtus* on Conſcience, made me ſenſible of this in a thouſand ways. I there found a Deſcription of what I felt within myſelf; the different Parts I play'd in regard to Conſcience, the Art I uſed for making my advantage of that of other Men, and rendering the Language of my own uſeleſs. But what ſtruck me moſt, was the Cloſe of his third Letter. The Effect of it was ſuch as I cannot deſcribe; and I perceive it affected me ſo ſtrongly, only as it ſent me more directly to Sentiment and Experience.

Crito. I find the *Reveries* contain'd in thoſe Letters, have a near Relation to what we have read to-day; and muſt explain one another. I ſhall read them again with pleaſure, in order to obſerve that Relation more diſtinctly.

Philo. I long to do ſo as much as you, *Crito*; and I fear this will become a Subject of Diſpute between us.

Eraſtus. That the Diſpute may not run ſo high, and that you may not come to Blows for *Reveries*, I believe we ſhall act prudently in leaving this Place immediately.

DIA-

DIALOGUE XIV.

CRITO, PHILO, and ERASTUS.

Erastus. WELL, *Crito*, is the Dispute ended at last?

Crito. Yes, *Erastus*, and without Effusion of Blood. I hope *Philo* and I shall quarrel no more, unless you set us together by the ears again with some new *Reveries*. If that happens, we shall not be displeased with our Quarrels on those Terms.

Erastus. I am a peaceable Man, *Crito*; it shall not be said that I sow Discord among Friends. Besides, I am one of those fantastical *Reveurs*, who do not produce their *Reveries* as they are bespoke. But now we are talking of *Reveurs*, here is a Man * who is in a fair way of being one in good earnest. Dear *Philo*, where are you? A hundred Leagues from this Place, I am certain.

Philo. I was in your *Reveries*, *Erastus*; and methinks it was not kind in you to awake me out of them.

Erastus. If I may be so inquisitive, pray in which of them was you?

Philo. In that we read last. I take that to be the Key to all the rest, and think it may help us to solve all the Difficulties in Religion, which have hitherto seemed most considerable. I had some of several sorts, which

* Looking on *Philo*.

which I intended to propose to you; but as I was perusing those *Reveries* last Night, I found most of them answer'd.

Crito. I have sufficient Reason in my turn to be jealous of the Progress *Philo* makes every day in the Art of *Reveries.* I own he exceeds me in that Point.

Philo. How do you know that, *Crito?* You judge by Appearances then; because you have observed me wear the Air or Mien of a *Reveur*, you immediately conclude me an Adept in the Art like *Erastus.* At that rate, how many heavy, melancholy, stupid Blockheads might pass for Adepts, while they are silent. I beg you would not confound our Friend with Persons so different from him in Reality, though they may in some measure resemble him in Form; I speak of the Time when he is actually engaged in his *Reveries.*

Erastus. Let us have done with the Reality and the Form, so far as they may relate to *Erastus*; and let us own they are extremely different when consider'd in themselves. From the universal Blindness of Men in that regard, proceed their erroneous Judgments, both in the common Course of Life, and in what concerns Religion.

Crito. It is true, the Character of an honest Man and a Christian is now-a-days settled by Form and Appearances. Is any thing farther necessary for establishing his Reputation? Great Numbers sit down contented with

with theſe; and as the Caſe ſtands, I know not whether, if the Choice was propoſed, to have the Reputation of a good Man, without being ſo, or to be a good Man, without the Reputation of ſuch; I know not, I ſay, whether many would chuſe the latter.

Philo. Now you ſpeak of being a good Man, I remember the Definition *Eraſtus* gave us the firſt time we ſaw him. He told us, in ſhort, that a good Man, and a Man devoted to God were the ſame. I could not object againſt this Definition; but I reduced this Idea of being devoted to the Divinity to a ſmall Point. I thought no Principle of Religion more reaſonable, more inconteſtable, or more univerſally received than this; and yet I know not whether any thing is leſs known than the Reality of this Devotion, or more ſtrongly oppoſed by Men, though without their own Knowledge.

Eraſtus. That is preciſely the main and eſſential Part of a Chriſtian's, or good Man's Character, which few give themſelves any Concern to acquire. The Form and Appearances are put on with leſs trouble, and do a Man as much, perhaps more, nay infinitely more Honour.

What can be the Reaſon of that? It is becauſe the Reality of this Devotion requires that a Man ſhould not himſelf chuſe the Form or Appearances; but that he be ready or diſpoſed to receive the different Forms, acording

to

to the Will of the Maſter, to whom he is devoted. This is ſuppoſed in the Forms of Prayer uſed in public. What Proteſtations do we not there make of being devoted without Reſerve? *Thy Will ſhall be the Rule of our Conduct, and thy Glory the End of all our Actions.*

Aſk ſome one of the Congregation, whether he conceives the Nature of this Engagement, he will tell you, it conſiſts in *conſecrating to God our Mind and our Body, as a living Sacrifice, and without Reſerve, every thing that is in us, and depends on us, to be employ'd in his Service* *.

But have you any Idea of this Sacrifice without Reſerve? Do you underſtand what it is to propoſe the Glory of God as your End? Are you acquainted with this Rule, by which you proteſt you deſign to regulate your Conduct? Here a Man would be puzzled; not only one of the moſt ignorant ſort, but perhaps one of thoſe who paſs for the moſt devout and knowing.

If we have not ſo much as the Idea of it, what will become of the Reality? The Conſequence will be, that it will not be diſtinguiſhed, and conſequently will be oppoſed wherever it is; and thus what we were ſaying concerning the extreme Diſtance between the Subſtance,

* Other Expreſſions taken from the ſame Form of Prayer.

Substance, and the Form, Reality, and Appearances, will be made good.

Philo. Had you ask'd me the same Question some Weeks ago, *Eraſtus*, I should have been pretty much at a loss for an Answer. I believe, that, to get rid of you, I should have ask'd you in my turn, whether those Prayers were not noble, and fit for raising the Soul? For so I have heard them defined by several.

Eraſtus. And I perhaps, in my turn, should have ask'd you, Whether Expressions ought not to be the Images of Thoughts and Sentiments? You would certainly have granted it. On that foot, I should likewise have granted, that the Words I have quoted from the Forms in question, are beautiful Images of what makes the Reality in a Person devoted to God. I should then have left you to judge, whether this Original is every where to be found, and whether the Image can be fit for raising the Original, or is only fit for representing it?

Crito. It has been thought a bold Charge to reproach Men with contenting themselves with beautiful Ideas concerning Religion; but in this Particular, they are satisfied with less. They amuse themselves with fine Words: insensibly take them for the Reality; and make a great noise with the Terms *Consecration*, *living Sacrifice*, *being absolutely devoted*, &c. Have they any Idea of what is meant by them?

them? I own it is not long ſince I have conceived any; and believe, had I been attack'd on that Subject, I ſhould have been obliged to define them by ſome ſynonymous Words; the common Shift of ſuch as know Things more by Expreſſions than by Ideas.

Eraſtus. At that rate, how far are Men from being able to diſtinguiſh Truth exactly! And are we to be ſurprized, if they ſubſtitute Appearances in the room of Reality, of which they have not even the Idea? Of what, for example, have Men leſs the Idea, than of the Reality of thoſe Words lately quoted: *To make the Will of God the Rule of our Conduct, and his Glory the End of all our Actions?* What is the Glory of God? and what is meant by propoſing it as the End of all our Actions? It is an Engagement; and one would think Men ought to have ſome Idea of what they engage to perform. I could wiſh that thoſe, who renew this Engagement every day by a Repetition of the Words, would explain themſelves on the Idea they fix to them.

Philo. That would be requiring too much, *Eraſtus.* I know ſome People, who, to embaraſs you in their turn, would aſk you whether you diſapprove of the daily Repetition of thoſe fine Words.

Eraſtus. My Anſwer to that Queſtion would be ſoon ready. I would tell them, that ſuch as have in themſelves the Reality of what thoſe Words

Words express, may repeat them as often as they please, without danger of injuring Truth and Sincerity: that, as for those who are guilty of Falshood in the Repetition, it is their Business to judge in what Rank they place themselves, and what hazard they run. This would be my whole Reply: Their Conscience, if listen'd to, would explain the Matter farther.

Crito. But, dear *Eraſtus*, were you ask'd what Idea you yourself entertain of this Engagement, what Answer would you give?

Eraſtus. I would say, *Crito*, that the Glory of God is a Subject so far above my Capacity, that I dare not attempt a Definition of it. I say the same of the Disposition, by which a Man proposes that Glory as the End of all his Actions; that Disposition, which I admire, and which must necessarily be the Result of the most refined Love, is so widely different from the Disposition of a Beginner like me, that I can form no distinct and clear Idea of it. Do not pretend to dispute the Appellation of a Beginner with me; I confess myself such, in all respects; and much more so in regard to these sublime Dispositions.

As to the Will of God, and the Disposition by which a Man chuses it for the Rule of his Conduct, I can speak of them only from what I have learnt by a Beginning of Experience. I will say therefore, that Men can know

know the Will of God only by the Light of Truth, or by the Testimony of Truth.

Truth bears witness for itself, in two manners, as a Cause, and as an Object, directly and indirectly: directly within, by each Man's Conscience: indirectly without, by the Organs, which it has inspired or directed in their Writings; and this is what we call the *Holy Scripture*. As a Cause and simple, Truth acts immediately on the Conscience, it is felt before it is perceived: as an Object, it is perceived much more by its Effects than in itself. The Light of the Sun is an Emblem of it; it acts on the Senses as a Cause, before it becomes the Object of Perception. Even when it is perceived as an Object, it is of so simple a Nature, that we distinguish nothing particular in it, unless it be by the Objects it discovers, and the Reverberation from Bodies on which it is reflected.

I return to Truth, which is *Light*, as St. *John* calls it; and I say, that if its first Office is to act on the Sentiment or on Conscience; the first Duty of the Creature in respect to it is to consent to receive its Impressions, to open his Eyes in order to perceive the Objects it discovers, and the Path it points out. Here Consent comes into play; so that by a determinate *Yes* or *No*, a Man may open the Door to, or shut it against the Light. Here, in a word, the Integrity of the Will decides, and becomes

becomes in Man the Key of Knowledge, the Introduction to Truth.

It is Matter of Fact that the Light of the Sun neither is perceived, nor gives us the Perception of any Object, if we shut our Eyes, with a design of not seeing. Nothing depends more on Man's free Will than the opening or shutting his Eyes, and turning his Sight from certain Objects, in order to fix it on others.

Nor is it less certain that Truth can make no progress in Man, but in proportion to his Consent to give it Entrance, and that he gives it Entrance only by obeying it.

In proportion as Truth is obeyed, it more distinctly shews the Road we are to take; it serves as a Guide in that Road; interiourly by Sentiment, or the simple Language of Conscience: Exteriourly it shews the same way painted to the Life, in the outward Testimony it bears of itself. I speak of the Holy Scripture. This Scripture declares we can know the Truth, or the Will of God, only as far as we are determined to obey it without Reserve; that *those, who are of God, hear the Words of God*, because *they have the Testimony of God within them.*

Thus Truth is the Soul and Center of Religion. Thus it is the Rule which rectifies all Things, without being capable of Correction, *the Light which manifests all Things, and without which we cannot see whither we are going.*

going. I ſpeak here of *ſimple*, *univerſal*, *uncreated Truth*, *the Source of all Truth*, which has exiſted in God from Eternity, and which is call'd in Scripture ſometimes *Wiſdom*, ſometimes the *Word*, ſometimes the *Light*, and ſometimes *Life*.

It is this Truth, I ſay, which the Scripture teſtifies to be the Light and the Life. To this Light it refers Men for Information, and Direction in diſcerning Truth. Such as make a proper uſe of this exteriour Teſtimony which Truth bears of itſelf, and give room within themſelves for the direct and ſimple Teſtimony of Truth, without reſerve, really devote themſelves to God, *offer themſelves to him as a living and holy Sacrifice*, *without reſerve*, *and take his Will for the Rule of their Conduct*, being guided by Truth itſelf.

Theſe have within themſelves the Reality of thoſe Words, which all profeſs to admire as beautiful, and which are ſo to him who pronounces them, only as far as they are the Image of his Diſpoſition. Is it neceſſary now to aſk, who is fit to repeat them? It is every one's Buſineſs to enquire what Truth and Sincerity may allow him to do.

Philo. You have, before you was aware, anſwer'd ſeveral of the Difficulties, I deſign'd to propoſe to you, *Eraſtus*.

I ſhould have aſked you, for example, how Truth can act on the Sentiment? I find myſelf anſwer'd by the Compariſon of Light, which

which is felt without being perceived, and by your adding, that Truth acts on the Sentiment, as a Cause, as something living and operating.

I should likewise have ask'd, whether Conscience is, properly speaking, simple and primitive Truth? I find an Answer to this Question in your saying that Conscience is a direct Testimony of simple Truth, a Voice or Language in which it expresses it self; that Conscience, in short, is the Echo of Truth.

I find from what you have advanced, in what sense you before said that its Language is infallibly that of Truth; that it is invariably the same, the Rule by which all things ought to be rectified, without being capable of Correction it self, the *Light which cannot be enlightened, but which ought to be allowed to enlighten us*, by removing the Obstacles which oppose it.

Thus I find the whole of Religion really reunited in the single Point of Truth: that Truth being *one*, leads such as admit its Testimony interiourly, to admit the Testimony it gives of itself exteriourly in the Language of the Scripture, as the Scripture constantly refers us to that of Conscience.

I find that these two Testimonies, having one and the same Truth for their Principle, agree perfectly well, and mutually assist each other. Methinks the Distinction of *Truth* and what is *True* might take place here: that Conscience, as the Echo of Truth, ought infallibly

fallibly to lead to the Discernment of what is *True*, in the Language of the Scripture; and that it ought to be the business of what is *True* to reduce all things to *Truth* as its Origin.

Crito. As you go on, *Philo*, *Eraſtus* was not much in the wrong when he ſaid * the Lawyers go through with whatever they undertake. You have made ſo exact a Reduction of ſeveral Truths to one Point, that *Eraſtus* would find it a hard matter to explain things better.

Eraſtus. I ſhould have been very much puzzled how to do it in ſo few Words.

Philo. I have not done yet; and you ſhall ſee I am going to act like *Eſop*'s Raven; in order to make you admire my fine Voice, I will communicate the Sequel of my *Reveries* on thoſe of *Eraſtus*.

Crito. You will be very much ſurprized, *Philo*, when I tell you we are not in the humour of hearing your fine Voice to-day. I believe it is time to be gone; but we ſhall loſe nothing by the matter; we will reſerve the Sequel of the Song till to-morrow. What ſay you, *Eraſtus?*

Eraſtus. I think it a good Thought, *Crito*; and the more ſo, becauſe if *Philo*'s Voice ſhould chance to prove of an inchanting nature, like that of the Sirens, we ſhould be in danger of ſtaying here all Night.

Philo.

* Dialogue I.

Philo. If you at firſt began to ſpoil me by your Applauſe, you ſoon repair the Damage by making me put up my Compliment, without aſking my Conſent. However, I muſt take the honour of it to my ſelf, and thank you for this friendly Office.

DIALOGUE XV.

CRITO, PHILO, *and* ERASTUS.

Eraſtus. DEar *Philo*, we are now ready to hear your fine Voice.

Crito. Mr. Raven may begin when he pleaſes.

Philo. You interrupted me yeſterday, *Crito*, in the middle of my Period; and have made me ſo effectually forget my Compliment, that I cannot poſſibly recollect it.

Crito. In the mean time, till you can recover it, I muſt tell you what happen'd to me yeſterday.

I had left *Eraſtus*'s three Letters, or *Reveries*, concerning Conſcience, on my Table. Young *Fortunatus*, of whom I was ſpeaking the other day, laid his hands on them. He had no ſooner caſt his Eye on the firſt Page, but he expreſs'd a great deſire of reading them; and was ſo preſſing in his Demands, that I could not refuſe him.

That Inſtant I was call'd away, and left him alone in my Chamber near half an Hour.

In that Interval, a Lady, who was in the next Room, went into mine, and found *Fortunatus* employed in reading. She inſiſted on knowing what he was reading: he made a Secret of it; which increas'd her Curioſity. She imagined they were Letters of Gallantry, ſuſpected certain Perſons of being in the Intrigue, ſhrugg'd up her Shoulders at their want of Conduct, and, not being able to obtain a ſight of them, return'd to the Room from whence ſhe came, where ſhe found a Company of Ladies, to whom ſhe communicated her Conjectures. You may imagine they built Caſtles in the Air, and each of them made ſome new Diſcovery in the Myſtery.

During theſe Tranſactions, I return'd to my Room, where *Fortunatus* told me what had paſs'd. But by way of Parentheſis, I muſt give you the Character of the Lady in queſtion. She is a Perſon pretty well advanced in Years, with a Gravity ſuitable to her Age, prudent and wiſe, and devout to a degree. She has a Genius for Reading, can reaſon on all Subjects, not excepting Divinity; if you have any acquaintance with *Urania*, you will know her by this Deſcription.

Eraſtus. I know her only by Name. This is what they call a Lady of univerſal Merit.

Crito. I ſhould now give you an account of the other Ladies in the Company; but that would take up too much of our time.

You

You are only to know they were of different Ages and Characters. Some grave, some merry, and others a mixture of both.

They found some pretence for calling me aside, with a view of getting the Secret out of me: I diverted my self a good while with hearing their Conjectures; at last I yielded, and gave consent that *Fortunatus* should deliver them the Letters in question. He offer'd to read them to the Company: *Urania* disputed the Point with him; being apprehensive he would not give them entire. *Fortunatus* gave up the Contest: *Urania* ran over three or four Pages, and expressed her Surprize. All the Ladies fixed their Eyes on her, and were desirous of knowing the Cause of her Surprize. 'Tis, says she, because I do not understand this way of Writing: One does not know whether it is serious or jocose. Several very different Subjects are mentioned; such as Conscience, Truth, Musicians, Concerts, Magicians, Astrologers, a Prince in his Minority, a Regent, Vexation, Anger, *Reveries*, &c. Reconcile all this, if you please. These Letters, said I, must be penn'd by some *Reveur*; you will be able to judge of the matter, if you will give your self the trouble of reading them. *Urania* began, and continued to the end without interruption. It was very entertaining to see the different Looks of the Ladies. Some shrugg'd up their Shoulders:

ſome ſeemed tired; ſome expreſs'd their Surprize; and others were in a brown ſtudy. But the beſt diverſion was to hear them talk after the Letters were read.

Eraſtus. You ſhould have taken down their Remarks in Writing, *Crito.*

Crito. I did ſo; but took particular care not to be obſerved; the Diſcovery would have made them quit the Place immediately. I told them I would leave them, to allow them more freedom of Diſcourſe. I then returned into my Cloſet, which you know is contiguous to the Room, where the Ladies were; and, as the Partition is very thin, I loſt not one Word of the Converſation. At firſt I had ſome difficulty to underſtand them; for they ſpoke all together, and it was impoſſible to write any thing. It happen'd luckily for me, that one of the Ladies made a Propoſal of ſpeaking one after another, as the *Engliſh* do. The Propoſal was accepted; and, what was more ſurprizing, regularly obſerved. You ſhall ſee the Parts, that each of them acted on that occaſion.

(Crito *takes a Paper out of his Pocket, and delivers it to* Eraſtus.)

Eraſtus reads.

URANIA, SALOME, CLEOPATRA. Three Ladies almoſt of the ſame Claſs.

CLA-

CLARIETTA, CECILIA, FAUVETA. Of the Class of Waggs.

NEREA, EVODIA, SYNTICHE. Of the mix'd Class.

FORTUNATUS. The only Man.

Urania. " Ladies, what think you of this " way of Writing?

Salome. " I own I think it very extraordi- " nary. It cannot be denied but here are " some good things, such as are said, for " example, concerning Truth and Conscience. " But, after all, who disputes it with the " Writer? Who doubts that the Language " of Conscience is that of Truth? Methinks " there is no necessity of undertaking to prove " what is so evident.

Cleopatra. " Certainly; and Things are " render'd more dubious by too nice En- " quiries into them. I am for keeping the " high beaten Road, as our Forefathers did; " People in our Age imagine themselves " wiser than they. For my part, I suspect " every thing that savours of Novelty. I " stick fast to the old Rock; that is always " the safest way; is it not?

Urania. " No doubt: though we are not " to reject, without Examination, every thing " that has some appearance of Novelty. I " stand by the Maxim of trying all things " and holding fast what is good. What " shocks me in these Letters, is the Mixture

" of Banter and ſerious Diſcourſe; nothing " ſeems to me worſe put together. The Au- " thor ſhews by that his want of Judgment.

Salome. " I was juſt going to make the " ſame Remark. Every thing ought to be " in its proper place. Not that I am an " Enemy to Mirth and Gaiety. I am par- " ticularly pleaſed to ſee them in young Peo- " ple; but when the Diſcourſe turns on Re- " ligion or Truth, 'tis another Affair. On " ſuch occaſions one ought to be grave and " ſerious. What think you, Ladies?

Cleopatra. " I am entirely of your mind; " there is a time for all things; a time to " diſcharge the Duties of Religion, by the " publick and private Exerciſes it preſcribes, " and a time to be merry and divert one's " ſelf.

Urania. " The worſt is, that young Peo- " ple are ſo fond of being merry, that they " cannot, without the utmoſt difficulty, paſs " from Gaiety to the Gravity which the " Exerciſes of Religion require.

Cleopatra. " That is ſo true, that I have " no ſmall difficulty to prevail with ours to " acquit themſelves of thoſe, which are the " moſt indiſpenſible. This is the humour " of young People; every thing that ſavours " of Devotion or Serioufneſs, lays them un- " der conſtraint; and I am of opinion that, " if ſome care was not taken in that Point, " they would have no Religion at all.

Urania.

Urania. " I am of your opinion; and 'tis " what gives me much trouble. But now " you speak of young People, let us make " these young Ladies talk a little, that we " may know their Sentiments on what we " have read. Take notice how they form " themselves into a separate Company, with " *Fortunatus.* They are afraid of being put " on the serious Strain one moment. Are " you not, young Ladies?

Clarietta. " On the serious Strain! We " are deeply engaged that way; and are " making our Remarks on the Letters.

Urania. " Be pleased to communicate them " to us.

Clarietta. " I was saying that, to speak " freely, I should be more capable of judg- " ing whether a Head is well dressed or " not, than of distinguishing what is most " valuable in these Letters. But, after all, " the Style of this *Reveur* hits my Taste " pretty well; and if all serious Discourses " were written in this manner, they would " be read with some pleasure.

Fauveta. " I ingenuously confess'd that on " seeing the bare Title of such Letters, and " that of some little Songs, I should have " given the preference to the latter. After " such a Declaration, who would have ima- " gined that I could have attended so long " without being tired one moment. And I " doubt whether these Letters have not had

" certain Charms for me, which I never found " in any Song.

Cecilia. " For my part, I own that, had I " not thought them Letters of Gallantry, I " should have left the Room before the " Reading begun. When I understood " what was the Subject of them, I was seized " with Curiosity: I was desirous of know- " ing what follow'd; and found a certain " *Je ne sçai quoi*, which would not allow me " to go.

Urania, *to the three other Ladies.* " May " we not know what you philosophical La- " dies think of them?

Syntiche. " Pray, Madam, how long has " that fine Title been my due? Have I de- " served it for my Skill in Spinning? I leave " it to *Evodia*, and *Nerea*, as their Right. " They, who have studied Logic, may justly " be called by that Name.

Nerea. " I neither pretend to be a Logi- " cian nor a Philosopher; however, a little " Logic never does any harm. It may be " useful in enabling one to distinguish, in " what one reads, Truth from Falshood, the " Matter from the Form, and the Substance " from the Accidents.

Salome. " See how learned she is; 'tis a " pleasure to hear her talk. I take her to be " one of those who are best able to form a " sound Judgment of the Letters in question.

Urania.

Urania. " Perhaps ſhe is. Some Perſons " with their good Senſe alone, have as much " Judgment, as others with all their Logic. " But you have not yet given your opinion, " *Evodia.* You have, however, a double " right to do it, both as a Logician, and a " Perſon of Wit.

Evodia. " I freely acknowledge, I would " willingly give all my Logic for the leaſt " of theſe *Reveries*, or for the Secret of think- " ing in this manner. Logic never made " me feel a certain *Je ne ſçai quoi*, which " theſe *Reveries* have awaken'd in me. And " that *Je ne ſçai quoi*, being once awaken'd, " has ſaid more to me than the *Reveries* " themſelves.

Nerea. " Without valuing Logic too " much, I place it at its due value. The " little knowledge I have of that Art has " enabled me to obſerve ſeveral Faults in the " Letters in queſtion. There are ſuch In- " ſtances of falſe Conſtruction, which would " induce one to think the Author never " ſtudied Grammar. The Tenſes are fre- " quently confounded : the Verb with the " Adverb ; and Genitive Caſe with the Ab- " lative.

Clarietta. " We have a right to enter an " Action againſt him.

Fortunatus. " In reality, to pretend to " write *Reveries*, without being a Gramma- " rian, is not allowable.

Evodia. "So, Mr. *Fortunatus*; ſhall it be "ſaid that you remain behind the Curtain, "without explaining yourſelf? You ſhall "not come off without telling us your "Opinion.

Fortunatus. "What Opinion can you ex- "pect from a Libertine, like me, in Matters "where Religion is concern'd? It is well "enough known that I have hitherto had "no great acquaintance with it; judge then "whether I ſhould be a proper Perſon for "the Taſk you impoſe on me. All I can "ſee of the *Reveries* in queſtion is, that I "have read them with ſome pleaſure, and "heard them read with more. I did not "indeed obſerve whether the Author was a "Logician, or a Grammarian; but in qua- "lity of a *Reveur*, I think he has not per- "form'd ill; and believe that his *Reveries* "would go farther toward reconciling me "to Religion, than the moſt eloquent Diſ- "courſes."

Crito. Here *Fortunatus* look'd on his Watch, and told the Ladies it was paſt Eight: the whole Company decamp'd, and thus ended the Scene.

Philo. Could you have expected, *Eraſtus*, to find here, at once, the Diverſion of a Walk, and that of a Comedy?

Eraſtus. I did not expect to be ſo well entertain'd. You ſee, after all, that the *Re-*

veries

veries are good for something, were it only to make the Ladies talk.

Crito. And give them an opportunity of shewing their Wit and Judgment. I was ready to break out into Laughter, particularly when the young Lady talk'd of Logic and Grammar. You shall see our Logician will make fine Comments on the Reveries. She desired to take a Copy, in order to shew them, as she said, to better Judges. No doubt she means some Gentleman, who is both an able Grammarian and Logician. The poor *Reveries* will be prettily decipher'd.

Eraſtus. A great Honour truly for a Logician to amuse himself with deciphering *Reveries*, and quarrel with a *Reveur*. This would be but barely pardonable in a Lady, who profesſes that Art. It is remarkable that your Ladies attack'd only the Form and the Terms, without excepting againſt the Things.

Crito. I had a ſtrong Inclination to lay down my Pen, and anſwer them; eſpecially when I heard it gravely decided, that Gaiety and Religion are two diſtinct Articles: that every thing ought to be in its proper place, *&c.*

Eraſtus. This confirms what we were saying ſome time ago; that the Idea of ſomething gloomy and ſour was in the Minds of ſeveral, annex'd to the Idea of Religion: that hence young People conceive ſuch a diſ-

like to it; and acquit themſelves of thoſe Duties, which they think moſt indiſpenſible, only with Conſtraint. It is diverting to hear it ſaid that, if great care was not taken of them in this Point, they would have no Religion at all. Have they a greater ſhare of it, when they act the Grimace of it?

Crito. There are Men in the World, who would anſwer, that this is ſomething, however.

Philo. Would a Man be ſatisfied with ſuch a Reply?

Eraſtus. Every one pretends to hate Grimace. A Man cannot bear that another ſhould practiſe it on him, while at the ſame time, he practiſes it on himſelf; and is ſatisfied with himſelf on thoſe Terms.

Crito. This is what I, ſome time ago, called a want of Honeſty in regard to ourſelves, and what our Friend *Philo* did not comprehend.

Philo. Rather ſay, I would not comprehend it. I pretended Ignorance, while at the bottom I perceived well enough it was my own caſe. What you ſaid gave me much Torture, by referring me to my Conſcience, which in its turn ſpoke much more to me on that Subject.

Crito. You ſee *Eraſtus*'s *Reveries* occaſion'd ſomewhat like this in one of our Ladies, as much a Logician as ſhe is.

Eraſtus.

Eraſtus. Your two Logicians ſeem of very different Characters; which proves that things produce good or bad Effects in Men, only according to the good or bad Uſe made of them.

Philo. Hence it may be concluded that the Diſpoſition of the Heart renders exteriour Things good or bad; not that exteriour Things render the Heart good or bad.

Eraſtus. That is a grand Principle, confirmed by the Goſpel, and which extends much farther than to the Uſe of Food. Men know how to make an advantage of it in what is agreeable to themſelves; but are unacquainted with both the Subſtance and Eſſence of it.

Crito. You make me remember, *Eraſtus*, that, to juſtify my own Inclinations, I have frequently made uſe of theſe Words: *To the Pure all things are pure.* It remain'd only to know whether that was my caſe; whether my Heart was really pure. This I choſe rather to ſuppoſe, than examine to the bottom.

Eraſtus. You are not the only Perſon, *Crito*, to whom this has happen'd. The ſame Illuſion has often led me into Miſtakes. I have ſince imagined my ſelf like a ſick Man, who to follow his own Whims, ſhould juſtify himſelf with this Maxim: *To the Healthy all things are wholeſome.*

Crito.

Crito. The Maxim is very true; but the Application of it is not always juſt.

Eraſtus. Men proceed exactly in the ſame manner with regard to Religion. They take out of the Goſpel ſome Maxims, true in themſelves; but which ceaſe to be ſo in reſpect to them, by the bad Application they make of them.

Crito. By this means they have the Art of changing Truth into Falſhood. Is not this what the Scripture calls changing what is right into Wormwood? *Amos.*

Eraſtus. I know not whether the *Falſe*, that reigns univerſally among Men, is not more pernicious to them than the moſt diſorderly Inclinations of corrupt Nature. 'Tis by the *Falſe* that thoſe Inclinations are diſguiſed and entertain'd, and even render'd ſuch as not to be known. Were this not the Caſe, they would inſpire a Horror, and find but little Refuge.

Philo. I know ſome, who being themſelves under the Dominion of the *Falſe*, would aſk you what you mean by that Term.

Eraſtus. The *Falſe*, as it manifeſts itſelf without, is, properly ſpeaking, the Art of Diſguiſing. How many Myſteries doth this Art cover, both in civil Society and religious Affairs! This Art may be called the univerſal Key, or the *Paſſe-par-tout*, proper for letting every one in to his own Pretenſions.

In

In order to know what the *Falſe* is in the World, we need only, for a moment, imagine the Metamorphoſis we ſhould ſee, were the Art of Diſguiſing baniſhed from among Men; were all Hearts to be laid open, and every one was obliged to think aloud. Thus we ſhould be able to judge whether this Art doth not ſerve as a Maſk, or Covering to all that is hideous and ſhocking; and whether being employ'd for hiding Evil, it doth not, at the ſame time, afford it Protection and Nouriſhment.

Philo. This is a good Demonſtration of the Maxim, you juſt now advanced; ſince the *Falſe* is a pernicious Evil, not only in itſelf, but as it ſerves to ſupport all ſorts of Evils by the beautiful Appearance it gives them. So much for the *Falſe*, as it manifeſts itſelf without; but what is it in its Origin?

Eraſtus. Was you to aſk me, *Philo*, what is Darkneſs, I ſhould anſwer, that it is cauſed only by the Abſence of Light.

I might likewiſe reply, that the *Falſe* is produced by the Abſence of Truth. All the difference here is, that, properly ſpeaking, Darkneſs is nothing; whereas the *Falſe* is ſomething. Bare Darkneſs is much leſs oppoſite to Light, than the *Falſe* is to Truth. If Darkneſs gives us the Sight of no Objects, it doth not diſguiſe them; whereas the *Falſe* is a deceitful Glimmering, that diſguiſes all it ſhews.

Bare

Bare Darkneſs makes no oppoſition to Light; it gives place to it when it appears. The *Falſe* oppoſes Truth, as the Light of a Candle produces a falſe Light at Noon. This Compariſon is not ſufficient for characterizing the *Falſe*; and here it ought to be remember'd that all Compariſons are lame.

Crito. I think I perceive the Defect of this. The Light of the Sun eclipſes the falſe Light of the Candle much more, than the Candle can eclipſe the Light of the Sun; whereas the *Falſe* oftner makes Truth diſappear, than Truth does the *Falſe*.

Eraſtus. Dear *Crito*, you do not fully comprehend my Meaning. If in one Senſe it is true, that the *Falſe* has a greater power to eclipſe Truth, than Truth has to eclipſe the *Falſe*; we are to ſeek for the Cauſe of this Difference, not in Truth itſelf, but in the Obſtacles which Men place in its way.

Truth in itſelf would not have leſs power to obſcure the *Falſe*, than the Light of the Sun has to eclipſe that of a Candle, did not Men voluntarily ſhut up the Avenues, in order to ſubſtitute the *Falſe* in its place; as it is in their power to ſhut up the Avenues againſt the Light of the Sun, in order to ſubſtitute a borrow'd Light in its room.

Let us ſay that, properly ſpeaking, *Truth in itſelf cannot be eclipſed by the Falſe*, as the Light of the Sun cannot be eclipſed by that of a Lamp. But, as the Light of a Lamp,

Lamp, though it does not eclipse the Sun, eclipses the Light which it diffuses on Objects; and in that respect it may be said that the false Light eclipses the true; it may be likewise said, that the *False*, though it doth not eclipse Truth, eclipses the Light which it diffuses on Objects, and that that Light is nothing but the *True*, as we have distinguished it from *Truth*.

Hence it is easy to conclude, that the *False* is properly the Opposite of the *True*: that, as it is the Property of the *True* to shew Objects such as they are, without imbellishing them; it is the Property of the *False* to shew them for what they are not, to disguise some by making them appear beautiful, and others by making them look ugly.

Philo. I might say, I have all my Lifetime been under the Dominion of the *False*, without perceiving it; and, though I have no Idea of it, I but now begin to discern it. I, however, imagined myself very capable of distinguishing the *True* from the *False*. I even fancied I hated the *False* above all things; because I hated some of its Effects in other Men. Disguise, for example, appear'd horrible to me, when I saw it worn by others; but I imagined myself free from it, because I avoided what was most gross, while I made use of what was more refined. I should perhaps speak more correctly, if I said that my

own

own Diſguiſe was imperceptible, only becauſe it was become as natural to me as Breathing.

Crito. This may be called defining things exactly. I am almoſt jealous of you, *Philo*, for explaining the matter ſo juſtly. But, not to leave you the whole Honour, I add to your Definition, that the Art of diſguiſing appears no longer an Art in thoſe in whom the *Falſe* reigns ; ſo natural is this Art become to them : that this Art is expreſs'd much leſs by the Words they ſpeak, than by the Face they put on, by their Eyes, their Geſture, and the whole of their Behaviour. As the Idea of Diſguiſe is confin'd to ſaying, on purpoſe in a groſs manner, the contrary of what we think, it is eaſy to flatter ourſelves on that Article. We have now, *Eraſtus*, conſider'd the *Falſe* in its Effects. It would be material.....

Eraſtus. I underſtand you, *Crito* ; you would likewiſe conſider the *Falſe* in its Origin. This is not ſo eaſy ; it is much leſs difficult to diſcover the Origin of the *True* than that of the *Falſe*.

The Origin of the *True* is Truth, which has ever exiſted in God. Conſequently, the Origin of the *True* is eternal ; and as it had no Beginning, ſo it will have no End.

This is not the Caſe in regard to the *Falſe*. We certainly know, there was a Time when it did not exiſt : it could not exiſt, when God *was the only Being ; when pure and ſimple*

Truth

Truth was all, and alone. Where could the *Falſe* find room then?

The *Falſe* therefore has had a Beginning, and muſt have been poſteriour to the Exiſtence of Creatures, as being always relative to ſome particular Being; ſo that had there been no particular Being, there would have been no *Falſe*.

Crito. I remember you ſaid the ſame of the *True* or particular Truths; that if there had been no Creatures, or particular Being, there would have been no particular Truths. How is it poſſible that the two Oppoſites ſhould reſult from the Exiſtence of the ſame Creatures?

I have another Difficulty. If the Origin of the *True* is eternal, it cannot, in all reſpects, be the Oppoſite of the *Falſe*, which had a Beginning.

Eraſtus. Though the Origin of the *True* is eternal, it doth not thence follow, that it had no Beginning. The *True* may be conſider'd in two reſpects; as relative at the ſame time both to primitive Truth, and to the Creatures.

In the firſt reſpect, we may grant it had no Beginning: In the laſt, it is evident it is only the Conſequence of their Exiſtence; and in this Point the *True* and the *Falſe* are preciſely the two Oppoſites, or Contraries.

In order to diſcover now how it is poſſible that the two Contraries ſhould reſult from the Exiſtence

Exiſtence of the ſame Creatures, we ſhould know the Nature of thoſe Creatures; an Enquiry, that doth not belong to a *Reveur*. All he can ſay of it, in that Character, is, that if the two Oppoſites, the *True* and the *Falſe*, have been produced by ſome Creature, it muſt have been endow'd with *Freedom* and *Underſtanding*.

Underſtanding, in order to be ſuſceptible of the Impreſſions of Truth: *Freedom*, that it might receive or not receive it at pleaſure. Truth once received produces the *True*: Truth being rejected, the *Falſe* takes its place. Hence it is eaſy to conclude, that the *True* and the *Falſe* muſt have been occaſioned by the free Will of an intelligent Being, according to the Choice it was pleaſed to make.

Crito. Some would here aſk you, what that intelligent Being is; whether an Angel or a Man.

Eraſtus. I ſhould ſay; it muſt certainly be he who deviated from his original Uprightneſs: If the Queriſt admitted the Teſtimony of Scripture, he would not ſuppoſe it an Angel. I know it is not faſhionable to take the *Moſaical* Account of the Temptation too literally; but, without diſputing on the Letter, we might obſerve the Deſign of that Hiſtorian; the Tendency of which is to ſhew us the *Falſe*, at that time ſet in oppoſition to the *True*, and Man placed between them to determine his Choice of one or the other by his own

own free Will. The Event gives us to understand that he chose the *False*; or rather was deceived by taking the *False* for the *True*.

Is there any necessity of going so far back, to find the Reality of this History? Might it not be call'd, as to the Substance, the History of all Ages. Let Men dispute as long as they please concerning the Fact and the Circumstances of that Event; is it not sufficient, that what passes in our days, is a Repetition, or a speaking Picture of it?

Is it not inconteſtable, that Man is still placed between the *True* and the *False*; and doth not the Event every day prove that his strongest Inclinations draw him to the latter; and that his Will carries him to it?

However, he never determines on the *False*, as such; but as it wears the appearance of the *True*, or as he gives it the Colour of the *True*.

Philo. Eraſtus has painted us several things with one single Stroke. This Point of View might be sufficient for unravelling innumerable Difficulties.

Eraſtus. What we have said of the *False*, as it shews itself without by Disguise, is no more than a Consequence of the *False*, which Man has allow'd free Entrance into himself. But whence comes it that he gives so great a preference to the *False*, since he is so fond of the Image and Appearance of the *True?* It is because the Image or Appearance amuses him

him agreeably, without producing any real Reformation in him; even without letting him see such a Reformation is necessary.

Whereas the Reality of the *True*, or simple Truth, which is its Origin, endeavours this Reformation in Man, by acting first on the Sentiment, or Conscience.

This Sentiment is painful, as it undeceives Man of the favourable Opinion he had entertain'd of himself, and attacks him in the tenderest Part, where he cannot suffer any thing should make an Attempt on him. I speak here of the Opinion of a pretended Uprightness or Honesty, of which this Sentiment disabuses him; and of which he is not willing to be disabused.

Philo. I find Proofs within myself of all *Eraſtus* has been saying. And I remember, by the Acknowledgments which *Crito* has more than once made, that his Case must be the same with mine.

Crito. Exactly; I long'd to tell you so, *Philo*; but you would not hear me.

Philo. I heard you often enough, *Crito*, in spite of myself; but in reality, I was not willing to hear you. I thereby see the Truth of what *Eraſtus* has often told us; that every thing in Man must begin with the Will: that, according to the Determination of that Faculty for the *True* or the *False*, it may conduct Man to what is most divine, or most diabolical.

Eraſtus.

Erastus. From which let us conclude, that in regard to every Man in particular, the Will is the Origin of the *True* or the *False*; as it allows the one or the other free Entrance. But I believe we forget ourselves, and that it is later than we imagine.

Philo. I cannot prevail with myself to quit either *Erastus* or the Walk. Shall we make a bargain for accommodating the whole matter? Come and sup with me, and after that we will return, and indulge our *Reveries* here by Star-light.

Erastus. I take you at your Word, *Philo*; and am persuaded *Crito* will join me.

Crito. I know my own Interest too well to refuse the Proposal; and *Philo* would have been caught, had he not invited me in good earnest.

DIALOGUE XVI.

CRITO, PHILO, and ERASTUS; *Walking after Supper.*

Philo. I Know not, *Erastus*, whether your Taste agrees with mine or not; but methinks this is the best time for walking.

Erastus. At least it is most proper for *Reveries*; every thing seems to invite to them, even the Croaking of the Frogs, not to mention the murmuring Brooks. But the Business of *Reveries* excepted, it must be own'd that

that the View of the Day is quite another thing: it has ſomewhat gay and lovely, to which all Animals give a welcome. I ſpeak of ſuch as appear in the Day, and particularly of Birds; among which, Man ought always to be placed in the firſt Rank.

Crito. I underſtand you, *Eraſtus*; you mean that Man ought to be, in all Senſes, a Day-bird.

Eraſtus. Right; and I add, that if Man loves the Day, it is rather that which he ſhares with thoſe little Animals, than the Day which is proper to him in the Quality of Man. In that reſpect, he avoids the Light; and may be called a Night-bird. Not that he was formed for that Character, but becauſe he has made a free Choice of it.

Philo. Perhaps thoſe who have the greateſt averſion to the Light, are ſuch as imagine themſelves moſt enlighten'd, and moſt capable of an exact Diſcernment of Objects.

Eraſtus. Moſt certainly, *Philo.* This comes not from their being in abſolute Ignorance, which being nothing, may perhaps be compared to mere Darkneſs; but from their being enlighten'd with a falſe or borrow'd Light, to which they give the Name of Truth, and which ſatisfies them ſo far, as to leave them nothing to deſire or ſee beyond it.

Crito. I am thinking of what you lately ſaid, *Eraſtus*, that *the Will is in every Man the Origin of the True and the Falſe.* I imagine

gine it might be objected, that the Diſcernment of the *True* and the *Falſe* belongs to the Underſtanding, rather than to the Will; and that it is the Buſineſs of the Eye to diſcern Objects, before the Will makes its Choice.

Eraſtus. It is, I own, the Buſineſs of the Eye to diſcern Objects; but can the Eye open and fix on ſuch or ſuch an Object, without the Conſent of the Will, even when the Light actually ſhines? The Will, as the ſovereign Faculty in Man, has it always in its power to avoid it, more or leſs. It uſes innumerable Shifts to ſcreen itſelf from the Light more or leſs.

Philo. I never obſerv'd, *Eraſtus*, the Power, which the Will has over the whole Man, and even over the Underſtanding, which ſeems independent of it. I underſtand the Caſe here is the ſame as in regard to the Eye, which is commanded by the Will to open or ſhut, partly or entirely, to look on one ſide of certain Objects, when it is not willing to ſee them entirely, and ....

Eraſtus. Here the winking with the Eye, mention'd in the Goſpel, takes place. In proportion as the Eye opens and ſhuts on a ſudden, it ſees and does not ſee; or rather it has ſo imperfect a Glimpſe of all things, that it takes them rather for what they are not, than for what they are.

Judge now what weight is to be allow'd to the Judgment that may hence be formed;

and whether by this way of ſeeing, it be poſſible to ſet a right value on things.

Crito. This Principle of the Will's Power over the Underſtanding is, perhaps, one of the moſt inconteſtable, and, at the ſame time, the leaſt known.

Eraſtus. The *Falſe*, that reigns in the World, may be conſider'd either as *ſpeculative*, or *practical.* The Will is the Origin of both.

Crito. I could never have comprehended how the *Speculative Falſe*, or the *Falſe* in point of Opinion could proceed from the Will, without the Principle eſtabliſhed by *Eraſtus.* I now find it eaſy to explain; and am much miſtaken if another Objection, which ſeveral will, no doubt, ſtart againſt the Letters on Conſcience, is not as eaſily ſolved by the ſame Principle.

Eraſtus. Perhaps, I gueſs at that Objection. It is about placing Conſcience above Reaſoning.

Crito. It is ſo, *Eraſtus.* I thought you wou'd be charged with aboliſhing all uſe of Reaſoning, or of right Reaſon; for you know one is confounded with the other.

Eraſtus. There certainly is a wide difference between *Reaſoning and right Reaſon.* For want of being acquainted with this Diſtinction, Men have fought with their own Shadows, and multiplied Diſputes about Words without end.

Crito.

Crito. Not to mention the differences among Divines on this Article, you know the Myſtics are accuſed of forbidding all Uſe of Reaſon, and repreſenting it as a very pernicious Thing.

Eraſtus. The Myſtics, or rather the Apprentices in that Syſtem, who have undertaken to ape the true Myſtics, have, perhaps, ſpoken againſt Reaſon, and ſhelter'd themſelves under their Authority, without underſtanding their Doctrine. It is diverting to obſerve how theſe Men blunder and daſh one againſt another. A Word, which they look on as ſacred, cannot be attack'd, but they immediately take fire, and are reſolved to defend it to the laſt. Another Word, which they conſider as out-lawed, becauſe it has been baniſhed by ſome one of their Saints, puts them out of all patience; they can bear it no more, than if it came out of the bottomleſs Pit.

By accuſtoming themſelves to quarrel about *Words*, Men come to ſubſtitute them in the place of the *Ideas* of Things. With many People, Words are like what Bank Bills once were in *France*. Men were content to be paid with Paper, and paid others in the ſame manner. There is ſome reaſon to believe the Credit of Words will fall as much as that of Paper, among thoſe who love Reality.

Crito. The Compariſon is pleaſant. But then it ſhould not be forgot, that every one loves Reality in Gold and Silver; but very

few give themselves any concern for the Reality of Truth. In this respect, Men are not displeased at being paid with Words; whereas it was Force only that established the Credit of Paper.

Philo. Since *Words*, destitute of Ideas, are not to pass current among us, *Eraſtus*, you are to give us an Idea of the difference which you make between Reasoning and right Reason.

Eraſtus. Before we shew the difference between two Things, we ought to form a distinct Idea of each. I have a right, therefore, *Philo*, to ask you what you understand by *right Reason*; for as the Ideas fixed to Words are arbitrary, the same Words may be employ'd for signifying different Things; and it is impossible to be understood, unless we first agree on the Sense we wou'd give to each Word.

After all, nothing is so childish as to dispute about the Sense of Words; as they are made only for understanding one another, what doth it signify what Sense we fix to them, provided we thereby explain ourselves the better. Pray, tell me then, what you mean by *right Reason*.

Philo. What do I mean by it? I understand by it a Reason, which forms a sound Judgment of every Thing, is capable of distinguishing the *True* from the *False*, the *Just* from the *Unjust*. But I perceive this is saying nothing.

nothing. The Term *right Reaſon* alone, implies more than all theſe ſynonymous Words put together.

Eraſtus. You are not ſatisfied with your own Definition, *Philo*; you are a little difficult. I know ſome, who wou'd be highly delighted with it, and be very much pleas'd with themſelves for making ſuch a one. However, it muſt be granted that it may be placed in the ſame Rank with that which ſays Black is not White.

Philo. I am very ſenſible of it, *Eraſtus*; and was very glad to let you alſo ſee that I was not ſatisfied with it. For this time, I throw back the Ball to you, that I may not amuſe you all Night with Definitions that ſay nothing.

Eraſtus. Muſt a *Reveur* once more tell his *Reveries* about Reaſon to Philoſophers, to Men, who have ſpent their whole Lives in enquiring into the *Reaſon* of Things?

But what is the meaning of the Term *Reaſon?* Is it a Thing that knows, or one that ought to be known? Moſt certainly the latter, becauſe inanimate Things have not a Reaſon that knows, but a Reaſon which may be known; that is, their Cauſe, their End and their Uſe. The Term *Reaſon* is ſynonymous to theſe; which, when taken right, comes up to the Idea we have form'd of the *True.* Is not the Term *Reaſon*, on ſome other Occaſions, taken in the ſame Senſe as

the *True*, the *Juſt*, and the *Equitable*, the Cauſe, or the Motive, *&c.* and not for the underſtanding of each in particular? By confounding Things of different Natures, the Term *Reaſon* is become ſo modiſh, that we uſe it on all Occaſions, and every one pretends to have Reaſon on his ſide.

Philo. You ſhew me what I never obſerv'd before, *Eraſtus*; Reaſon, which ought to know, is one Thing; and Reaſon, which ought to be known, is another. Our Language muſt be very barren, if it has but one Word to expreſs two Things ſo different.

Eraſtus. When we propoſe to ſpeak exactly, and come to preciſe Ideas, it will be no hard matter to avoid Ambiguity, by employing the word *Underſtanding* to expreſs Reaſon which ought to know, or the Reaſon of each Man in particular; and leaving the word *Reaſon* in general to ſignify what ought to be known, what is reaſonable, juſt, true, equitable, *&c.*

Crito. You put me in mind, *Eraſtus*, that the Term *Reaſon* is applied on a thouſand Occaſions, where that of *Underſtanding* cannot be admitted; as when we ſpeak of the Reaſon, we have for doing or not doing a thing: when we maintain that we have Reaſon on our ſide; and that nothing is more reaſonable than to act in ſuch or ſuch a manner. It is plain that by the Word *Reaſon*, we here mean ſomething Univerſal, to which every one has

a

a Right, and which belongs to no Man in particular.

Eraſtus. When we ſay, we muſt conſult Reaſon, right Reaſon, have we an Idea of ſomething particular, or univerſal?

Crito. Of ſomething univerſal, without doubt; for ſuch an Expreſſion doth not imply that we muſt conſult the Reaſon of Mr. Such-a-one, or Mr. Such-a-one. By right Reaſon we here underſtand ſomething general, which every Man is in a Condition of knowing and conſulting himſelf, without being under a neceſſity of paſſing through the Canal of others.

Eraſtus. In the next place, I aſk; is right Reaſon *one*, or *many?*

Crito. One, undoubtedly, as it is univerſal. I have not ſo ſoon forgot my Catechiſm, which tells me that what is *univerſal* is *one*, &c.

Eraſtus. Very well anſwered. Here is a Scholar who will make ſome progreſs: He has a good Memory.

Philo. He, perhaps, imagines he ſhall engroſs that Character to himſelf. I remember it as well as he; and if our Profeſſor will examine me, he ſhall ſee it.

Eraſtus. Well, Sir; is right Reaſon invariably right; or is it ſometimes falſe?

Philo. If it cou'd be falſe, it wou'd ceaſe to be right Reaſon; as I have learnt in my

Catechiſm, that *a Rule wou'd ceaſe to be a Rule, if it ceas'd to be right.*

Eraſtus. Very pertinently replied. Tell me, *Crito*; is it not evident then that right Reaſon is one, univerſal, and invariably right?

Crito. Yes.

Eraſtus. My firſt Scholar has given a judicious Anſwer. I wou'd know of the ſecond, whether it doth not thence follow, that the whole Doctrine of the Catechiſm relating to the invariable, right, only, univerſal Rule, is applicable to what we have called right Reaſon.

Philo. Without doubt.

Crito. Very learnedly replied. Here now are Scholars, who might have a Title to the Prize in *Reveries* on the firſt Promotion.

Crito. Mr. Profeſſor, perhaps, thinks he has to do with Scholars, docil enough to anſwer with *yes's*, and *without doubts*; but I have a difficulty to propoſe to him, which, perhaps, he will not ſolve ſo eaſily.

Eraſtus. That difficulty will, perhaps, be ſtarted in the Character of *Crito*, not in the quality of a Scholar.

Crito. It is this, *Eraſtus.* You here apply to right Reaſon, all you before applied to Conſcience. Do you confound them together; or ſuppoſe Conſcience and right Reaſon one and the ſame thing?

Eraſtus.

Eraſtus. I gueſs'd you was going to object in the Character of *Crito*. In order to explain ſo great a Difficulty, he muſt anſwer me once more in quality of a Scholar. I aſk then; is the Language of Conſcience invariably that of Truth? Are the Orders, which it pronounces, ſometimes true, and ſometimes falſe?

Crito. Invariably true.

Eraſtus. Can the Language of right Reaſon be ſometimes true and ſometimes falſe? Or, is it invariably conformable to that of Truth?

Crito. It is invariably right, or true, like that of Conſcience.

Eraſtus. Can you tell me, what is the Origin of the *True?*

Crito. Truth, as it is ſimple.

Eraſtus. Are there two ſimple Truths, or only one?

Crito. Only one.

Eraſtus. The Language of Conſcience, therefore, and that of right Reaſon, have but one and the ſame Origin.

Crito. I grant it, *Eraſtus*, both in quality of *Crito*, and that of Scholar. But ſtill, methinks, there ſhould be ſome diſtinction between right Reaſon and Conſcience.

Eraſtus. That may very well be, *Crito*; and were it not time to ſleep, rather than indulge our *Reveries*, we might purſue that Queſtion. But I am ſo drouſy at preſent,

that ſhould I pretend to talk, I ſhould run the riſk of telling you nothing but Dreams; and I ſhould not be very well pleaſed with acquiring the Title of Maſter-Dreamer, beſide that of Profeſſor of *Reveries*, with which you have dignified me.

Crito. How do you know, *Eraſtus*, but you may have a Dream to-night, that may confer that Title on you?

Eraſtus. If it happens ſo, *Crito*, I will place it to your account.

Philo. In the mean time, let us go, and try to ſleep, and we ſhall ſee to-morrow which of us three has had the fineſt Dream. He ſhall be ſtyled, Maſter-Dreamer, or, to ſpeak more honourably, Profeſſor in the Art of Dreaming.

DIALOGUE XVII.

CRITO, PHILO, *and* ERASTUS.

Crito to *Eraſtus.* GOOD-morrow, Sir. Is there no Dream on the Carpet to-day?

Eraſtus. If you have any to produce, I am ready to hear it.

Crito. *Philo* is furniſhed, no doubt.

Philo. He imagines he has gueſs'd it. I aſſure you, however, I ſhall produce no Dream; for if I had one laſt Night, I have quite forgot it; and I think that a ſufficient Excuſe for not repeating it.

Eraſtus.

Eraſtus. Perhaps, *Philo*, that Excuſe may not always hold good; you may recollect it, when you leaſt think of it.

Crito. However, we have a Magician in our Company, who can give us an exact account of it. In the mean time, let us ſtick to our *Reveries*, *Eraſtus* has engaged his Word for one more.

Eraſtus. You are mercileſs Officers; I find there is no getting out of your hands, without paying down ready Money. But you will be ſurprized if I ſhould give you Fables inſtead of *Reveries*.

Crito. No matter, ſo you do but pay.

[*Here* Eraſtus *pulls an old Manuſcript out of his Pocket, opens it, and reads.*]

" A certain *Necromancer* has left us the " following Relation in his Memoirs.

" Between *Arabia Petrea*, and the *Northern* " Extremity of the *Perſian* Gulf, lies a ſub- " terraneous Country of vaſt extent, which " is call'd the *Catacombs*.

" The Inhabitants of that Place are born " with very weak Eyes, and are very oddly " form'd in other reſpects. The Obſcurity " of the Country ſuits them in all regards. " They cannot bear the Light, without feel- " ing the moſt violent Pain. We are told, " however, that the Sun has in that Country " a different Property from what it has in

" ours; that it insensibly cures all Indispo-
" sitions of the Eye: that those who have
" courage enough to expose themselves to
" its Heat, and bear the Pain it causes at first,
" accustom themselves to it by degrees, and
" in time come to have no apprehensions
" from it.

" We are likewise told that those, whom
" the Light has penetrated most directly,
" and thus cured most perfectly, love it so
" as to be unable to live without it.

" This Country, though its Darkness differs
" but little from our Night, is not entirely
" inaccessible to some Rays of the Sun. The
" Inhabitants can allow it Entrance more or
" less as they please by little Wickets, which
" it is in their power to open or shut. These
" Wickets are placed at Openings made in
" the Rock, for allowing a Passage for the
" Light.

" Beside the Inlets, which the Light may
" have through these Wickets, there are
" here and there little *Paths*, through which
" the Light makes its way by several Wind-
" ings. These Paths are a sort of Turnings,
" which always run upwards, and are full of
" Stones, each of them serving as a Step.

" As the People go up, the Light grows
" stronger and less indirect; and they begin
" to feel something of the Sun's Heat, in
" proportion as they are enlighten'd by it.

" These

" Theſe Paths, which extend ſeveral " Leagues, terminate below in the dark " Country, or the Kingdom of the *Catacombs*; " and above iſſue into the light Country in a " vaſt Plain.

" The Inhabitants of the dark Country " can, by means of their Paths, hold ſome " communication with thoſe of the light " Country: they may even be led to it, if " they pleaſe; as the Inhabitants of the light " Country, may in their turn, go down into " the dark Country.

" It appears from the Memoirs, left us by " Hiſtorians, that thoſe different People have " but little Inclination to viſit one another: " that moſt of them have a very great aver- " ſion to it, which they cannot prevail with " themſelves to overcome.

" This Averſion may be accounted for in " the following manner: To begin with " thoſe of the gloomy Regions; it is eaſy " to conceive that the Pain, they feel from " the Light, is one of the chief Cauſes of it. " Beſides, they are born in that Country, " they find there not only all Neceſſaries of " Life, but likewiſe all that can render it a- " greeable. The Darkneſs is ſo far from be- " ing a grievance, that it is even pleaſant to " them. They have the Secret of making " Lamps, the Light of which doth not af- " fect their Eyes like that of the Sun. By

" that

" that Light they discern Objects, and make " several Works.

" These People are very laborious; and " abound in Manufactures of all sorts, pro- " portioned to the Wants of the Inhabitants. " Art supplies them with what Nature has " not afforded.

" As their Sight is extremely weak, most " of their Manufactures are employ'd for re- " lieving them in that point. This Relief " consists in an almost infinite Variety of " *Glasses* of all sorts. These *Glasses* are so " artfully made, that they do not appear like " those made in *Europe*. Some of them are " design'd for magnifying Objects; others " for Telescopes. They have Glasses well " colour'd, which communicate the same Co- " lours to the Object: others are proper for " embellishing, and hiding, or at least ex- " tenuating all Deformities.

" Beside these different Qualities, they " have one which is peculiar to them; they " may serve as Looking-glasses. Thus it is " easy for a Man, who holds them, to see " himself in what Light he pleases, and give " himself embellishing Colours. The worst " is, that others, who are Masters of the " same Secret, often strip him of those bor- " row'd Colours, and expose his natural Ug- " liness to view.

" As to the Inhabitants of the light Coun- " try, it is not surprising that they cannot

" prevail

" prevail with themselves to go down into
" the gloomy Regions. They have suffer'd
" too much in leaving them. After having
" endur'd, in long and troublesome Roads,
" all the pain the Sun can give to weak Eyes,
" the Light is grown familiar to them, and
" they are as well pleased with it as if it was
" their own Element. By the same Light,
" they, at one glance, discern both Persons
" and Things. They have no farther occa-
" sion for Glasses; which now wou'd even
" hinder them from seeing, or, at least, from
" viewing Objects as they are; and they are
" no longer in the humour of seeing them
" disguised. They have likewise lost the
" Inclination to borrowing Colours for giv-
" ing them Beauty in their own Eyes, or
" those of others. The Light, which by a
" Quality peculiar to that Country, serves
" them as a Mirrour, gives them a distinct
" View of their remaining Defects: they
" are willing to see their own Imperfections,
" and have them visible to others.

" After this Account, are we to be sur-
" prized that the gloomy Country, and the
" manner of living there, are become insup-
" portable to them? Not to mention the
" stifling Air of that Country; an Air that
" nothing purifies; and which must be in-
" fected by Exhalations from the Bodies pent
" up in it. This Air, compar'd to that
" breathed by the Inhabitants of the light

" Country,

" Country, wou'd pass rather for a Fog that
" hinders Respiration, than an Air proper to
" promote it.

" We read in the Memoirs of . . . . . .
" that a young *African*, who was conducted
" by a *Genius* to view the several Curiosities
" of the World, travelled into these two
" Countries. I shall here give you his own
" Account of them both. I pass by his De-
" scription of the Situation of the Country,
" to come to the Historical Part.

" The *Genius*, who instructed me, says he,
" having shewn the different Situation of
" these two Kingdoms, and the Passages
" from one to the other, put me on observ-
" ing the different Manners of the Inhabi-
" tants, and gave me some Pieces of History
" concerning them, which he tells me are
" worthy of Credit.

" These two People, said he, have one
" common Origin. It is related, that they
" were all at first placed in the Country of
" Light, and were well treated by the King
" of that Country; but that an Accident
" befalling them which prejudiced their Eyes,
" and at the same time made them deformed
" in other respects, obliged them to fly from
" the Light, and seek a Retreat in the *Cata-*
" *combs:* that, having found an *Asylum* suit-
" able to their Indisposition, they settled there,
" and set up the Manufactures we now see
" among them.

" I then ask'd my *Genius*, whence came " those Men who at present inhabit the " Country of Light?

" They quitted the *Catacombs*, said he, at " the repeated Invitations of the King of " Light. We are told that the same Prince, " mov'd with Compassion for those distem- " per'd People, continu'd to press their Re- " turn: that, for that purpose, he directed " the making of those Paths, which insen- " sibly lead from one Country to the other: " that he sent them repeated Messages, with " Letters Patent, assuring them the Light, " they so much dreaded, was the only Re- " medy that could cure them: He mention- " ed the Persons sent to them as so many " Witnesses of the Truth of what he said. " Those Messengers being taken from a- " mong them, had been courageous enough " to expose themselves to the Heat of the " Sun, and thus came in time not to fear it.

" History tells us, those Messengers were " receiv'd more or less favourably, according " to the different Periods of Time, in which " they appeared: That great Numbers of " them were ill treated and even persecuted, " not as Messengers from the King, but as " Impostors: that, however, the Letters Pa- " tent were register'd in the Public Annals: " that after the Death of those Messengers, " both they and the Letters were held in " great veneration: that they were restor'd

" to

" to the Title of the King's Messengers, and " the Letters to that of Royal Patents.

" Beside all this, as these Letters came " from the Country of Light, and were only " so many Evidences in its favour, they in- " sensibly receiv'd the Appellation of *Light*. " Hence the Name of *Light* is become fa- " miliar to the Inhabitants of the gloomy " Regions. As the Name of the King of " Light has in all times been honour'd by " them, as still professing themselves his " Subjects; every one was desirous of being " furnished with the Letters of Light: every " one valued himself on asserting their Excel- " lency; their Name and that of the King " echoed from all Parts.

" It is very remarkable that the same " Prince, having, from time to time, sent " Messengers with such Letters, they were " all ill treated. But what is still more sur- " prizing, is, the King's Son, appearing to " confirm the Testimony of his Messengers, " was taken for the greatest Impostor of all, " and put to death as such.

" Seiz'd with Astonishment at an Event " so incredible, I ask'd my *Genius*, whether " the King's Son was provided with such " Letters Patent, as were proper to make " him known to his Subjects.

" He was, replied he, provided with most " authentic Testimonies, beside the Evi- " dences given of him in the other Letters

" Patent.

" Patent. Were not those former Letters " consulted? said I. They were, answer'd " my *Genius*; and it was by those very Let- " ters that they thought themselves authoriz- " ed to reject him.

" Some difference they found between the " former Letters, and those brought by the " King's Son, was sufficient for making them " not know him. This, at least, was their " pretence; but at the bottom, it was their " Aversion to the Light, for which the Prince " had open'd a Passage more than all the for- " mer Messengers had done. Besides, the " Testimony which he gave, engaged great " Numbers of the Inhabitants to walk in the " narrow Paths: The Credit of *Glasses* be- " gan to decline: Several Persons ventured " to open the little Wickets, in order to ac- " custom themselves to the Impressions of " the Light, and view Objects by it.

" The Wickets being a little open'd, let too " strong a Light into the Country. Beside what " their Eyes suffered from it, they discover'd " Deformities, which till then had been hid: " A Remedy must be found for an Evil that " might be attended with such pernicious " Consequences, and convert the Kingdom " of the *Catacombs* into a Desart. This was " prudently perform'd by cutting off not " only the Prince himself, but all his Sub- " jects, who came after him to bear Testi- " mony of him.

" Now

" Now begins a new Epocha. Soon after " the Prince's Death, he was acknowledged " as the King's Son: the Act of thoſe who " had put him to death, was look'd on with " Horrour: His Hiſtory was recorded, as " alſo that of his Servants, and the Teſti- " monies they had born of him: Their " Writings were received as even more au- " thentic, than thoſe of the former Meſſen- " gers.

" Here, I aſked my *Genius*, whether theſe " laſt Teſtimonies given to Light had en- " gaged any Number of the Inhabitants to " walk in the narrow Paths.

" Some, replied he, ran to them with " eagerneſs immediately after the Prince's " death; but means were ſoon found for " barricading the Avenues. At firſt, People " were intimidated by Cruelties; but, it be- " ing obſerved that theſe only inhanced the " Deſire of making their way to the Coun- " try of Light, a milder Method was em- " ploy'd, which ſucceeded better in keeping " Men within the Kingdom of the *Cata-* " *combs*.

" This Method conſiſted in proving to " them that the Country where they lived, " was part of the Kingdom of Light; and " that they really enjoy'd it, was evident from " their being in poſſeſſion of the *Letters* of " Light, and their being propoſed to all the " Inhabitants, as the only Rule of their Con- " duct.

" duct. In order to facilitate the Reception " of them, and relieve the Weakness of their " Sight, new *Glasses* were invented, more " nicely made than the former; several sorts " of them were delivered to each Man. By " the assistance of these Glasses, new Disco- " veries were every day made in the Letters " or Book of Light. Never was People " more enlighten'd.

" But there is an Inconveniency remaining. " As the same Glasses serve to colour Objects, " and give them several Forms, according as " each Man managed them, the Contrarie- " ties found in the Book of Light, were as " numerous as the Glasses made for shewing " Contrarieties. One saw Black, where an- " other saw White. Some perceived Moun- " tains, where others found only some Grains " of Sand; in short, every one saw in them " the Road he was pleased to chuse, as clear " as the Sun at Noon-day. Thus a Divi- " sion has been introduced between the In- " habitants of the same Kingdom, between " those who agree in receiving the same " Book for Light, and call themselves Chil- " dren of Light. From that time they have " been separated and distinguished one from " the other by different Liveries, and diffe- " rent Surnames; but not one of the Parties " would quit the Title of Partisan of Light. " At the same time they charged one ano-

" ther

" ther reciprocally with being Sectaries of the " Kingdom of Darkneſs.

" As the Followers of each Party ſaw Ob- " jects through Glaſſes made by thoſe of his " own, every one accuſed the Glaſſes made " elſewhere of disfiguring Objects, and pre- " ſenting Black for White. Every one was " ready to lend his Neighbour the Glaſſes he " uſed, as the only true ones, which ſhew " things as they are.

" I then enquired of my *Genius* how long " this Conteſt had been depending. Above " ſixteen hundred Years, ſaid he, in relation " to the Subſtance and Eſſence. For the " Diviſion was not ſo evident, at firſt; but " the matter may be traced ſtill higher, in " the firſt regard.

" I aſked whether any one is accuſed of " being the Author of this Diviſion. Some, " replied he, attribute it to the Policy of the " Prince of the *Catacombs*, who is, they ſay, " at the bottom of this Affair, though he " does not appear in it. It is thought his " Deſign was by this means to detain his " Subjects in his Kingdom; and, by amu- " ſing them with Diſputes on the Book of " Light, make them give over all Thoughts " of thoſe narrow Paths, which lead to the " Kingdom of Light. The ſame Prince is " ſuſpected of having a conſiderable hand in " the ſudden Diſtemper with which the firſt " Inhabitants of the Country of Light were

" ſeized,

" seized, and of having brought them under " his Dominion by his Stratagems. At least " this is related as a Fact in the Book which " bears Testimony of the Light.

" But whatever becomes of this Question, " the Policy ascribed to that Prince, produced " its intended Effect. Each Party, pretend- " ing to be Partisans of Light, thought no " more of quitting the Country: Each of " them thought itself well situated; and, " if any entertain'd an Idea of a more lumi- " nous Country, they immediately said with- " in themselves, that this Light was reserved " only for another Life: that it was a rash " Attempt to pretend to make their way to " it, while they sojourn'd in this Body; in a " Body so little disposed to admit of Light: " that they could not face it without feeling " great Pain: that without that Light, the " Kingdom of the *Catacombs* afforded e- " nough; and that they might, in all re- " spects, remain there to advantage, be ac- " commodated with all sorts of Conveni- " ences; after which, when they left these " Bodies, they should be received into the " Kingdom of Light.

" In this the most opposite Parties gene- " rally agree. The Contest, however, still " subsists, the Breach grows wider; and it " is affirm'd that, beside the Division, which " reigns between the several Parties, each " Party is as much divided within itself.

" Here

" Here I asked my *Genius*, whether, among " all the Inhabitants of this Kingdom, there " were none who endeavour'd a Re-union. " Those only, said he, who dare undertake " to tread in the narrow Paths which lead to " the Country of Light. How so, said I? " Doth that remove the Differences between " the Parties? You shall know, replied he, " how this comes to pass. Whatever Di- " stance there is from one Path to another at " first, they come nearer together as the " Travellers advance. It is observable, that " several of those Paths meet, and become " one. Thus Men are re-united, who, at " their first setting out, were at a great di- " stance one from another.

" What farther contributes to re-unite " them, added he, is, that in proportion as " they approach the Light, and their Eyes " become able to bear it, they are all illumi- " nated by the same Light. The Diversity " of Lights, which occasions Division in the " Kingdom of the *Catacombs*, having no place " here, all Subjects of Dispute cease. As " they see Objects by the same Light, they " no longer differ in the Judgment they form " of them.

" After all, we are told that some Variety " in the manner of beholding things doth " not divide them. Their chief concern is " to proceed and walk toward the Light,

" rather

" rather than take notice of the Objects, they " meet in their way.

" But, said I, what is it that makes this " Road so difficult? And why is it trod by " so few? Some Courage is required for that, " replied my *Genius*; on one hand, to place " one's self above all that may be thought or " said by the Inhabitants of the Country; in " whose Opinion those Roads are useless, and " even dangerous: on the other, to bear all " the Pain, that weak Eyes may feel from " the Impressions of Light; not to mention " the Length and Difficulties of the Jour- " ney.

" I then asked, whether the Difficulties " were always the same in this Road; and " whether some had more to struggle with " than others. The Difficulties, said he, " vary *ad infinitum*, according to the Dispo- " sition, Age and Courage of the Persons.

" The first step, which is commonly the " most difficult, gives some infinitely more " Pain than others. I desired to know the " Reason of this; and who suffer'd most on " this occasion. Those said he, whose Indis- " position of Eyes is grown inveterate by " Age, and who for that reason must feel " more acute Pain from the Light. Another " thing that renders this first Step so dif- " ficult to them, is, that they till then thought " themselves in the Mansions of Light: they " had not observed the Indisposition of their

" Eyes in regard to it; and they must be " convinced of that, before they resolve on " this first Step. Great Numbers stop here, " not being able even to permit themselves " to be undeceived in that Point.

" Young People have less difficulty in " making this first Step, as their Indisposi- " tion in regard to the Light is less strong, " and as they did not imagine themselves so " clear-sighted as the former. Speaking in " general, continued he, some Exceptions " are to be made. Each Age has Obstacles " to surmount, which are peculiar to it; and " in every Age the Decision is made by the " Will. However, all things consider'd, " young People have the Advantage; and " among them, such as have Courage, and " presume least on their being enlighten'd.

" How happens it, said I, that among " People, who believe themselves in the " Country of Light, some think of leaving " it, and going in quest of another?

" This commonly happens, answer'd my " *Genius*, when on reading the Book, which " bears Testimony of the Light, some open " the Wickets to give themselves Light, and " thus find that Light of a very different " kind from what shines in the Kingdom of " the *Catacombs*: that the Book which bears " the Title of Light, is written only to give " Testimony of it, and direct Men to the

" Country

" Country where it shines. The same Book " points out the little Paths, as the Roads " which others have taken to arrive there. " Thus they are at full liberty to determine " whether they will take that Road, or re- " main in the gloomy Regions. If they re- " solve on the latter, they are obliged to " shut the Wickets, to avoid being hurt by " the Rays, which their Eyes are not able to " bear; for you must know that the Rays " of Light, which pass through the Wickets, " give much more pain than what shines in " the little Paths.

" But, replied I, is not the same Light " the Source of both? Yes, said he; but, " as it is more streighten'd by the Wickets " than by those Paths, and darts on such as " reside on the same place, it strikes them " so as to give them more pain than is felt " by those whom it enlightens in the Paths, " and walk without settling any where.

" I then enquired of my *Genius*, how they, " who are unacquainted with the Book which " bears testimony of the Light, could, with- " out that Guide, find the Paths that lead " to it.

" The Rays, said he, which they receive " at the Wickets, direct them to the small " Paths; then they begin to have some ex- " perience of the Light; and understand " that it comes from another Country. " Whatever their Eyes suffer from it at first,

" they think it beautiful, and perceive, by a " *Je ne ſçai quoi*, which is a Conſequence of " their Origin, that they were made for the " Country, where it ſhines. This Sentiment " they have in common with all thoſe, who " have not increaſed their Indiſpoſition by the " continued Uſe of the coloured Glaſſes. " They then try to find ſome Opening, " through which they may make their way " to that Light. While they are groping " along, they diſcover the little Paths, and " attempt to tread in them; and from that " moment it is entirely in their own power " to purſue their Journey. The ſame Light " ſerving them as a Guide, and continually " increaſing, it is, I ſay, entirely in their own " power, if they will but bear the Fatigues " which are inſeparable from ſuch an At- " tempt.

" Methinks, ſaid I, thoſe, of whom you " ſpoke laſt, more eaſily come to a Reſolu- " tion of travelling toward the Country of " Light, than thoſe in poſſeſſion of the " Book, which bears teſtimony of it. May " it not thence be concluded, that the ſaid " Book is become rather prejudicial than ad- " vantageous to them?

" It becomes prejudicial to thoſe only, re- " plied he, who pervert the Uſe of it; but is " infinitely advantageous to others. It ſerves " them as a Teſtimony through their whole " Journey, by the Relation they diſcover be-

" tween

" tween their own Steps and the Tracks of
" the Prince and his Meſſengers. It ſup-
" ports and encourages them under their
" Difficulties and Fatigues, and lets them
" know the happy Lot reſerved for the end
" of their Journey.

" Hence it appears that thoſe, who are in
" poſſeſſion of this Book, have a conſiderable
" Advantage over thoſe, who never heard of
" it; they have, at leaſt, more Encourage-
" ment and Aſſiſtance, and may thus un-
" ravel ſuch Difficulties as prove inexplicable
" to others.

" As for thoſe, to whom this Book be-
" comes prejudicial, they can blame none but
" themſelves. This Book directs them to
" the Light, and points out the way to it;
" ſhews them the Foot-ſteps of the Prince,
" and invites them to join him. This is the
" uſe of a Teſtimony. Let us now ſee how
" it is perverted, and made to ſerve contrary
" ends. Under pretence of doing it more
" honour, Men diveſt it of the Title of a *Te-*
" *ſtimony*, and call it the *Light*. Hence it is
" concluded that the gloomy Kingdom is
" well enlightened, that this Light is more
" than ſufficient, and that it would be un-
" neceſſary to ſeek for any elſewhere.

" Here I aſk'd my *Genius*, whether the
" Prince of Light ſends any freſh Meſſenger
" to reform this Abuſe; or whether he gives

" himſelf no farther concern for the Inha-
" bitants of the gloomy Country.

" It is thought, anſwer'd he, that he is
" ſtill equally concern'd for them; but it is
" added, that it would be unneceſſary for
" him to ſend Meſſengers; becauſe the Peo-
" ple are in poſſeſſion of the Book which
" contains the Teſtimony of the old Meſſen-
" gers: and, as the Prince doth nothing uſe-
" leſs, it is concluded he will ſend no more.

" On that foot, ſaid I, if the Prince form-
" ed a different Judgment of what may be
" uſeful or not ſo, and thought proper to
" ſend other Meſſengers, would they be
" treated as Impoſtors, merely becauſe the
" Prince ought to do nothing uſeleſs? Yes,
" replied he; if not by all the Inhabitants,
" at leaſt, by thoſe who have already deter-
" mined that the Prince will ſend none.

" But, ſaid I, would not the way of Exa-
" mination take place in this caſe with ſeveral
" of the Inhabitants? Perhaps it might, an-
" ſwer'd he; but there is reaſon to believe,
" that the different Glaſſes, through which
" great Numbers would ſee them, would
" prevent their knowing them; and that
" only ſuch as would ſee with their own
" Eyes, and open the Wickets in order to
" receive Light, would be in a condition of
" knowing them.

" I then aſked my *Genius*, what is the
" Lot of thoſe who obſtinately reſolve to

" continue

" continue in the Kingdom of the *Cata-*
" *combs.*

" The most horrible that can be imagin-
" ed, said he. After some days Diversion,
" allow'd them by the Prince, in order to
" amuse them, they are removed into ano-
" ther Country belonging to the same Prince,
" where they feel the utmost Effects of his
" Vengeance. But what torments them most,
" is, that the Glasses and false Mirrours be-
" ing then of no farther use, they see them-
" selves, and are seen by others, as so many
" Monsters. In a word, they see all that
" the Obscurity of the gloomy Kingdom had
" hid from their Eyes; and their Bones are
" racked with acute Pains, which the Numb-
" ness, occasion'd by the Moisture of the
" said Country, had suspended; beside all
" which, their Eyes, which could not bear
" the Light, are here obliged to suffer a de-
" vouring Fire. In short, to compleat their
" Misery, they have only what they them-
" selves chose, and might have avoided."

Here end the Memoirs of the African.

Crito. This is a Fable as valuable as *Reve-*
ries; we are content to be paid in such Coin, *Eraſtus.*

Philo. We accept of it as good Money; but the Question will be, to which of us *Eraſtus* will lend this Manuscript.

Eraſtus. To end all Diſputes, to neither of you. (*Here* Eraſtus *puts the Manuſcript into his Pocket.*) It ſhall return to the Place from whence it came; and if you will take my advice, we will go home.

DIALOGUE XVIII.

CRITO, PHILO, *and* ERASTUS.

Philo. I Hope *Eraſtus* has brought the Manuſcript with him. I wiſhed him no good laſt Night for refuſing it me. I wanted to take a ſecond view of ſeveral things.

Eraſtus. I thought you had been ſurfeited with Fables. What would the World ſay, ſhould it be known that Philoſophers, ſuch as *Crito* and *Philo*, amuſe themſelves with reading or hearing Fables?

Crito. You ſee, *Eraſtus*, that *Philo* is a little childiſh in that particular. And I own I have no leſs deſire to ſee the *African*'s Narrative. Would you believe that, as much a Fable as it is, I find it reſembles Truth in ſeveral reſpects.

Eraſtus. That is ſurpriſing.

Philo. You Philoſophers can find Relations in things the moſt unlike.

Eraſtus. In reality, who would have thought of looking for Truth in the Memoirs of a *Necromancer*, or in the Narrative of an *African?* None but *Crito* could do that.

Crito.

Crito. Without doubt. What if I should tell you, I find some relation between the colour'd Glasses, and false Reasonings or Sophisms?

Eraſtus. Wonderful Penetration! You shall accept of the Task of unfolding those Relations more at large.

Crito. I perceive you will want me for that; and I give you my Word to do it. But first, *Eraſtus* must perform what he promised us the Day before yesterday.

Eraſtus. What, I pray?

Crito. Have you forgot, *Eraſtus*, that after Mr. Professor had examined his Scholars, it was concluded that *right Reason and Conscience had but one and the same Origin?* Whereupon a Question was started, whether there is not some difference between them. This Mr. Professor engaged to explain.

Eraſtus. Your Memory is better than mine, *Crito.* In my dealings with you, I must take care not to be too lavish in Promises. I see you are not inclined to abate any thing of your Right.

Crito. What you say, is truer than you imagine, *Eraſtus*; and that in other respects than these in question. I mean that, if Interest was at all concern'd in the Affair, you would find me much stiffer in my Demands.

Eraſtus. I easily take your word for that, dear *Crito.*

Philo. Perhaps *Crito* would not have been diſpleas'd, had you been a little incredulous.

Eraſtus. He would have been in the wrong for ſaying it, if he did not deſire to be believed. I take all my Friends ſay of their own Failings, literally; as I am willing they ſhould take what I may ſay of mine in the ſame manner.

Crito. I will not tell you that I am a little vexed at dropping that Word. I am now reduced to an Alternative, very mortifying to Self-love. I muſt of neceſſity paſs in your Judgment either for a ſelfiſh Perſon, or a Diſſembler. Which would you adviſe me to chuſe?

Eraſtus. Is there any choice to make, dear *Crito*, in regard to a thing that is or is not? Doth not the *True* ſubſiſt independent of Opinion?

Crito. I own that, *Eraſtus*; but is it not cuſtomary to enquire what is advantageous or diſadvantageous, rather than what is juſt or true?

Eraſtus. You are in the right, *Crito*; I had forgot that Maxim ſo univerſally received in Practice, though generally diſown'd in Speculation.

Philo. Methinks a Maxim ought to be admitted by the Underſtanding or Reaſon, before it is received by the Will.

Eraſtus. That is a great queſtion. It is evident from Experience, that the Will rather determines

determines the Underſtanding, than is determined by it.

Philo. I remember we agreed on that Point the other day, when we were ſpeaking of the Power, which the Will has over the whole Man, and over the Underſtanding in particular. But may it not be objected, that the Will doth not come to a Determination, 'till the Underſtanding has found the *True* or the *Juſt?*

Eraſtus. Be pleaſed to obſerve, *Philo*, that the Perſuaſion of the Underſtanding, concerning the *True* or the *Juſt*, influences the Will only in the *dernier Reſort*; but that at firſt the Will ſecretly reſolves on what it deſires the Underſtanding ſhould perſuade. The former commands the latter, with an Authority which it even conceals from itſelf, to give it a view of the *True* and the *Juſt*, in what it judges moſt advantageous.

Crito. At that rate, I ſhould think the Will may be compared to a Queen who ſhould firſt ſecretly gain the Conſent of her Parliament, for the Deciſion of ſome Cauſe, and afterwards order the ſame Cauſe to be pleaded before her and the whole Parliament, where a plurality of Voices is to determine either for Right or Equity; after which ſhe ſhould pronounce Sentence in favour of Equity.

Eraſtus. Might it not likewiſe happen that, from the Art uſed by the Council to embelliſh the Cauſe, the Queen may be perſuaded ſhe

is directed by Equity alone in her Decision? Hence it is easy to conclude that, when the Will has beforehand declared for what is agreeable to it, it finds innumerable Reasons for persuading itself of what it wishes.

Philo. Such Reasons are not certainly what you have called *right Reason*; for that being always *right*, cannot accommodate itself to, or agree with the *False*; besides, those Reasons are *many*, whereas *right Reason* is but *one*.

Crito. Here is a Scholar, who knows how to make use of his Catechism. For my part, I always forget my self, and, like a troublesome Scholar, ask Mr. Professor to explain the Difference between *Conscience* and *right Reason*, since they both have the same Origin.

Eraſtus to *Crito*. Is the Light of the Sun *one*, or *many*?

Crito. One only.

Eraſtus. Very well. Though the Light is but *one*, is it not endow'd with several different Properties, according to the Subjects on which it acts?

Crito. Yes.

Eraſtus. Among other Properties, has it not these two in particular; that of making itself felt or perceived by Sense; and that of making us perceive or discern an Infinity of Objects?

Crito. Certainly.

Eraſtus.

Eraſtus. This is underſtanding things. But tell me; is there not ſome difference between the bare and undoubted Sentiment which you have, for example, of its being Day at preſent; and the determinate Action by which you open your Eyes to diſcern the Objects around you, by the help of the ſaid Light?

Crito. Without doubt.

Eraſtus. This is anſwering exactly. You grant then that a Cauſe, one and the ſame in its Origin, may vary in its Effects, or ſhew itſelf in different Manners.

Crito. That is certain.

Eraſtus. Very well. Do you not now think it would be eaſy, by this Emblem, to find out the Difference between Conſcience and right Reaſon?

Crito. Yes.

Eraſtus. If ſimple Truth be the Origin of both, as we have proved, may we not compare the Effect it produces on the Conſcience, to that ſimple and ſudden Sentiment, by which we begin to experience what Light is?

Crito. I think ſo.

Eraſtus. And may we not alſo compare *right Reaſon* to the Day which the ſame Light diffuſes on Objects, and to the ſimple Action of the Sight, by which it diſcerns or views them?

Crito. I think we may.

Eraſtus,

Eraſtus. This ſhews your Judgment. Now to my ſecond Scholar. We have ſeen that *ſimple* Truth, which is but *one*, ſhews itſelf in Man two different ways; by which of them does it begin to make itſelf known?

Philo. It begins to make itſelf perceived or known in the Conſcience.

Eraſtus. Very well. Why does it begin with Conſcience, before right Reaſon? Is it not becauſe the Light makes itſelf perceived, in a ſudden and ſimple manner, before it diſtinctly ſhews any Object?

Philo. That is the very Reaſon.

Eraſtus. Does not your Catechiſm ſay, * *that ſimple Truth, as the right Rule, labours only to make Man upright?*

Philo. True.

Eraſtus. That, in order to make Man *upright*, it muſt begin with ſhewing the *Falſe* within him.

Philo. Yes.

Eraſtus. And that it makes him perceive the *Falſe* in his *Will*, before it ſhews him the *Falſe* in his *Ideas?*

Philo. Exactly ſo.

Eraſtus. Has it not likewiſe been ſaid, that the Will ought to be corrected before the Ideas; becauſe that Faculty is ſupreme in Man, and by it he may be led into the way of Truth, when it is *upright*; as he is ſtrengthen'd by

* See Letter 3d, from *Eraſtus* to *Crito*.

by it in the way of Lying and Seduction, when it is *false?*

Philo. Yes.

Eraſtus. May not it thence be concluded, that *Man is incapable of diſcerning the True, or of conſulting right Reaſon, if the Will is falſe?*

Philo. Certainly.

Eraſtus. And that is only in proportion to the Uprightneſs of his Will, that his Ideas are rectified, or he is guided by right Reaſon in diſcerning the *True?*

Philo. Without doubt.

Eraſtus. This is ſufficient for explaining the Section in our Catechiſm, which we undertook to conſider to-day.

Crito. I do not repent of having been a little troubleſome; Mr. Profeſſor may expect I ſhall be ſo again, as occaſion offers.

Eraſtus. Perhaps, you may not always find him in the humour of acting the Caſuiſt; and the Scholar, with all his Importunity, may have nothing to advance. But let us talk no more at preſent of Profeſſor and Scholar. I have kept my word; it is *Crito*'s Buſineſs to keep his. He ought to remember, he promiſed to explain the Relations he finds between the coloured Glaſſes and falſe Reaſonings.

Crito. No doubt, without my Aſſiſtance you would not be able to diſcover them; or, tell us, for example, that apparent or ſubtle Reaſonings

Reasonings have the property of making Objects appear bigger or less, according to each Man's particular Taste or Interest; that, by virtue of the same Secret, every one may see things in the Light, which best pleases him; give himself fine Colours, impose on the World; and, in short, varnish over the *False* with the appearance of the *True*, and disguise the *True* in such a manner, that it cannot be known or distinguished.

Philo. A Man must be very cunning to find out such exact Relations.

Crito. I knew you wou'd admire the Justness of my Discernment. What if I should tell you, I find still more Relations with this Day's Catechism on *Conscience and right Reason?*

Philo. We shall be agreeably surpriz'd at the Discovery.

Crito. You are to know, then, that I find a Relation between the Openings, through which the Inhabitants of the gloomy Country may receive Light, and the Means which each Man may have of being enlightened by simple Truth: that the Rays of Light, which pass through the Wickets, might represent the first Traces of simple Truth on the Conscience; that is, that Remorse and those Apprehensions, which shew a Man he is in the *False*, and at the same time invite him to take the opposite Road.

That

That the Light, which ſhines on thoſe who walk in the little Paths, may ſignify that of *right Reaſon*, which continually increaſes, in proportion to the Progreſs made by the Will in Uprightneſs.

That the Liberty, allow'd the Inhabitants of the ſaid Country to open, or ſhut the Wickets, expreſſes the Liberty given to every Man of hearing or admitting, more or leſs, the Reproofs and Invitations of Conſcience, or ſhutting up the Avenues in order to exclude them.

That the more or leſs acute Pains, which the Eyes ſuffer from the Rays of Light, in proportion to the Indiſpoſition of that Organ, may ſignify the Trouble and Confuſion occaſioned by ſeeing ourſelves in the *Falſe*, after we have receiv'd the Applauſe of the World for being in Uprightneſs and *Truth*.

That this Pain is render'd more ſenſible by our Reluctancy in quitting the Road we had taken.

Philo. As you go on, *Crito*, you will leave us no room for gueſſing. I wou'd add, that the Glaſſes, or apparent Reaſonings, come in very ſeaſonably to the Aſſiſtance of thoſe, who cannot prevail with themſelves to take another Road.

They ſerve to juſtify their Choice, to perſuade them they are already, where they ſhould be; in a word, that the Road in which

which they are travelling, is that of Uprightneſs and Truth.

I here relate only one Circumſtance of my Story; and ſhould certainly find ſeveral others in the ſame Fable, had I *Crito*'s Penetration.

Crito. Though my Penetration in this Point is ſomewhat uncommon, I will not engroſs the whole Honour of it to myſelf. *Eraſtus* muſt help us to explain one Difficulty.

If the Inhabitants of the gloomy Kingdom repreſent thoſe, who wilfully remain in the *Falſe*, and in Illuſion; what are we to underſtand by the Inhabitants of the Country of Light? What is that Country? And what ſort of People inhabit it?

Eraſtus. It is eaſily comprehended, that the Country oppoſite to that of the *Falſe*, and Illuſion, muſt be that of Truth and Reality.

Crito. That is not my Queſtion, dear *Eraſtus*; I wou'd fain know whether the Inhabitants who reſide there, are in the Body or out of the Body.

Eraſtus. To clear up that Point, we ſhall very much want the Aſſiſtance of the *Genius*, who conducted the *African*; and I wiſh he was hang'd for not aſking his Governour ſome Queſtions on that Subject. Were we to deal in Conjectures, I ſhould ſay, I believe that Country, taken in a ſtrict and rigorous Senſe, to be the other World; ſince the Idea of pure Light, which is bounded by nothing,

repreſents

represents something farther, than the most advantageous Dispositions which can be supposed in this Life, in regard to Truth.

However, to take it in a more extensive Sense, it may be said, that as soon as the Will enters into Uprightness, it quits the *False*, and begins to enter into the Element of the *True*, or of Truth. The Disposition of those, who wilfully remain in the *False*, is represented by the State of such as obstinately remain in the gloomy Country; and that of those, who are making their way toward the Country of Light, represents the Disposition of such as getting at a distance from the *False*, every day give more room to the Passage of Light.

Crito. Hence it may be concluded, that such as walk in the small Paths, cease to be of the Number of the Inhabitants of the gloomy Country; but can they be rank'd with the Inhabitants of the Kingdom of Light?

Eraſtus. The Appellation of Candidates or Travellers towards the Country of Light, wou'd suit them better than that of Inhabitants; as the latter Title signifies something fix'd; which is not properly applied to Persons in motion. However, as those Paths are supposed very long, and the Persons are all along more or less illuminated, as they are at a greater or less distance from the Country of Light; those who have travelled farthest in those

thoſe Paths, and thus make nearer Approaches to the Light, may be termed Inhabitants of the Light, in compariſon of ſuch as make but ſmall progreſs in the ſaid Paths: The Light, which ſhines on the latter, being ſo indirect and weak, that it may rather be call'd a Glimmering than Light, in compariſon of what ſhines on the former.

Philo. May not thoſe, who are but juſt enter'd into the little Paths, and therefore are ſtill near Neighbours to the gloomy Kingdom, be conſider'd as belonging to it, in the ſame manner as we call thoſe Inhabitants of Light, who are neareſt to it?

Eraſtus. We muſt diſtinguiſh, dear *Philo*, in regard to the nearneſs of both to the oppoſite Country. Thoſe who have juſt enter'd the little Paths, though very near the gloomy Kingdom, turn their backs on it, and remove farther and farther from it every ſtep; whereas thoſe, whom we have call'd Inhabitants of the luminous Country, inſtead of turning their back on it, direct all their ſteps toward it. Hence it is evident, that both travelling one and the ſame Road, though yet at a great diſtance one from the other, aim at the ſame end, and thus belong to the ſame Country.

Philo. The Fable ſeems to ſuppoſe, that thoſe who walk in the little Paths, may through them go back into the Kingdom of the *Catacombs.*

Eraſtus.

Eraſtus. They certainly may, by an Effect of their Liberty; and as ſoon as they turn about, they will ceaſe to belong to the Kingdom of Light. But it appears, according to our *Necromancer's* Suppoſition, that thoſe who have proceeded far enough in their Journey to be pleaſed with the Light, as their own Element, wou'd be far from entertaining any Thought of returning. As to thoſe who are ſtill in the Neighbourhood of the gloomy Kingdom, they are ſtill in danger of feeling ſome Inclination of going back again. However, if their firſt Reſolution of leaving that Country was ſtrong, the Temptation to return has little or no Effect on them.

Crito. You will not gueſs, *Eraſtus*, what puzzles me in regard to the Paths which reach from one Country to the other: I wou'd fain find out *the fixed Point*, which divides one World from the other; and this is what I cannot diſcover. I obſerve, that of all who die in the ſame Road, there are hardly two exactly in the ſame Place. Some quit this World in the middle of the way: others at their firſt ſetting out. Where then is the Term of this Life?

Philo. Another Thing that confounds me, is, to know whether thoſe who die at the beginning of their Journey, are tranſported in a Moment to the Abodes of pure Light; if ſo, they will enjoy a Privilege much beyond the others, who do not reach that Country, till they

they have ſuffer'd the Fatigue of a long and troubleſome Journey.

Eraſtus. You are both thus embaraſſed by confounding the End of the *Road* with the End of Life. They are very different; ſeveral Perſons meeting with the End of Life, at the Beginning of the Road. It follows from thence, that they are to travel all the way in the other World, which they have not travell'd in this.

We muſt obſerve, after all, that the Separation of the Soul from the Body makes no Change in the Eſſence of the Journey; it is only a Change of Circumſtances, in the Form, or in the Equipage of the Traveller; juſt as if a Coach chances to break down on the Road, the Traveller will be obliged to make the reſt of his Journey on foot.

Crito. He certainly wou'd be obliged to proceed on foot; becauſe in a Journey of this kind, no ſecond Conveniency can be found to ſupply the Place of the firſt. But were it poſſible to be tranſlated in a Moment by a ſort of Enchantment, into the Regions of pure Light, as *Philo* ſuppoſes, that wou'd be a ſhorter and much more agreeable Way. What think you, *Eraſtus?*

Eraſtus. It wou'd undoubtedly be ſhorter; but then the queſtion is, whether the Eye, as yet indiſpoſed, wou'd be able to bear that pure Light, without being inſenſibly accuſtomed to it; and whether the Impreſſions of

of ſo penetrating a Light wou'd not be more ſupportable to thoſe who ſhould be thus tranſported, than the moſt painful Fatigues of the Journey. We muſt conſult the *African's* Genius on this Point.

Philo. I am thinking . . . . . .

Crito. On what?

Philo. I remember *Eraſtus* promiſed to lend us fourteen Letters in Manuſcript, which treat of the State of the Dead.

Crito. Right. The good Man may, perhaps, imagine we will diſpenſe with his Engagement.

Eraſtus. I know you too well for that; but I have not yet been able to lend them you, not having them in my hands. It is enough that I give you my Word once more, and that you have them as ſoon as I am Maſter of them.

Philo. Will they afford us the Solution, which we wou'd aſk of the *Genius?*

Eraſtus. Perhaps they may; and ſome other Particulars.

Crito. May we not know the Author's Name?

Philo. I believe it may probably be *Eraſtus.*

Eraſtus. You will ſoon be undeceived on reading them, *Philo*; not to mention the difference of Style, you will find, toward the End, ſome Syllogiſms in form, which . . . .

Crito. Syllogiſms, *Eraſtus!* That is ſufficient for clearing you of the Charge. You

have hitherto given them but bad Quarter; and it is evident you are no Friend to them.

Philo. I could not have imagined it poſſible for *Eraſtus* to reliſh any Treatiſe, where Syllogiſms are employ'd.

Eraſtus. Very well. *Philo* gives me a good Rub. At that rate I ſhould be a Formaliſt, or Pedant, if the Form of a Book was capable of diſguſting me. I ſhould be as well pleas'd that the ſame Power were aſcribed to the Binding.

Philo. Why, ſeriouſly, *Eraſtus*, a fine Binding gives a Book a certain Beauty, and prejudices a Man in its favour. Judge then whether a leſs or more agreeable Form is not ſufficient to recommend, or diſcredit it, independently of its Contents.

Eraſtus. It muſt be acknowledged that there is ſomething in the Form, that impoſes on the Judgment, and that a Man muſt be well advanced in the Element of the *True*, before it has no Influence on him. I do not pretend to have made ſo great progreſs, *Philo*; but in regard to Syllogiſms, the prejudice muſt be too groſs, if the Form alone was ſufficient to affright me; and that, without enquiring whether they are employ'd for demonſtrating what is true, or diſguiſing what is falſe.

Philo. It ſeems a little hard to diſtinguiſh in this Caſe; ſince all Syllogiſms appear deſign'd for oppoſing the *Falſe*, and demonſtrating

ſtrating the *True*. How ſhall we ſtrip them of that borrow'd Shell, or reach the *True* through it? Muſt we here have recourſe to the colour'd Glaſſes?

Crito. Now you ſpeak of colour'd Glaſſes, or falſe Reaſonings; I had juſt now a mind to aſk *Eraſtus*, whether he ranks all ſorts of Reaſoning in the ſame Claſs.

Eraſtus. The very Appellation of falſe Reaſonings ſuppoſes ſome may be true or juſt. Thus, for example; we have been walking here two Hours and a half: It was paſt Five, when we came from home: Therefore it is now half an Hour after Seven, from all which I conclude it is time to think of Supper.

Crito. That is an unanſwerable Argument.

Philo. I have no Inclination to venture on the Character of Opponent, unleſs it be after Supper.

DIALOGUE XIX.

CRITO, PHILO, *and* ERASTUS.

Crito. HAVE you read the Gazette of this Day, *Eraſtus?*

Eraſtus. Not yet; though you know I am a great News-Monger.

Crito. Had I known you curious that way, I wou'd have brought it.

Eraſtus. Very curious, without doubt. News is always agreeable, were it only to

furniſh matter for Converſation. Is there any thing material to-day?

Crito. The Gazette ſays, that the Scene acted the other day, between *Urania*, *Salome*, &c. has made ſome noiſe. That ſeveral Perſons are very deſirous of ſeeing the Letters, or *Reveries*, which occaſion'd them: that Miſs *Nerea*, being acquainted with ſome ingenious Perſons, has ſhew'd them the ſaid *Reveries*; on which there is a great diverſity of Opinions.

Eraſtus. This is material News indeed. May I be ſo curious as to aſk where you found this Gazette?

Crito. In more than one Place, and in *Fortunatus*'s hands in particular, who is well acquainted with the Matter, and was an Eye-Witneſs of part of what paſs'd. He happen'd the other day to be at a Houſe, where a Perſon was reading them; *Urania* and *Nerea* were preſent. The firſt of theſe Ladies began with cenſuring the mixture of the Serious with the Gaiety of Style. The ſecond directed her Criticiſms againſt ſome Faults in the Conſtruction, which betray'd the Author's Ignorance; not to mention his Ignorance of Logic.

The Remarks of thoſe two Ladies had not an equal Weight with the whole Company. Some were not diſpleas'd with the Gaiety of the Style; they were of opinion, that was not the leaſt diminution of the Weight of the Matter.

Matter. As to the Faults in the Conſtruction, they were eaſily pardon'd in a *Reveur*.

Somebody took upon him to obſerve, that the Form was to be paſs'd by, and the Subſtance to be conſidered. *Fortunatus* ſeconded him; and added, that it wou'd be proper to enquire what could be the Tendency of ſuch Principles. The Majority differed from him; that wou'd remove all Subject of Diſpute too ſoon; and the Whole terminated immediately in the Uprightneſs of the Will, and ſincere Obedience to Conſcience: Thoſe were Principles which no one wou'd venture to attack; it was eaſier to carp at Trifles. The Ladies, in particular, were for the latter Game. To put an end to the difference, it was concluded that the Ladies and the Gentlemen of the ſame Taſte, ſhould be allow'd to examine the little Niceties; while thoſe of another Taſte, undertook to enquire into the Subſtance of the things themſelves.

Who excepted againſt this Diviſion? The Ladies, without doubt. They wou'd not hear of the Propoſal, eſpecially when they found not one of the Gentlemen wou'd venture to engage in their Party. What wou'd have pleas'd them in general, diſpleas'd them in particular; they muſt be admitted to the Examination or Diſcuſſion of the things themſelves.

Here the poor *Reveries* were diſſected. The firſt Queſtion propoſed was, whether the

Authority of Conſcience ought to be raiſed above that of Reaſoning. Several thought not; but they were ſoon embaraſſed by the Sequel of the *Reveries*; where it is proved, that if Conſcience is not allow'd the Precedence, it is render'd uſeleſs among Men.

They then went on to enquire whether Conſcience is any thing or nothing. Not one wou'd venture to give a Voice for the Negative: Not one wou'd paſs for a Perſon without a Conſcience. After this, they enquired whether every Man was obliged to obey his Conſcience; and here ſeveral of the Company were gravelled.

Should they ſay one may be excuſed ſuch Obedience, this wou'd be the ſame as having no Conſcience. Should they own that Conſcience ought always to be obey'd, this wou'd juſtify the Subſtance and main Drift of the *Reveries*. Here was no room left for Chicanery.

This prov'd an ugly Dilemma for the Majority. Moſt of the Company declined allowing either; and yet there was no Medium: a Choice muſt be made; either the *Reveries* muſt gain the Cauſe, or it muſt be maintain'd that Obedience to Conſcience may be diſpenſed with.

Some declared for the former, and look'd on the latter as what could not be maintain'd. They enumerated the horrid Conſequences which wou'd reſult from that Theſis; and appeal'd to their Opponents, whether they wou'd have

have any Dealings with Men of ſuch Principles. To this no Reply was made. The Oppoſition lay more in the Wills, than in the Underſtandings, which diſcover'd more than they cared to ſee; and the Subject was of too ſimple a nature to admit of Obſcurity; the common Shift of ſuch as wou'd avoid the Blow.

They were now reduced to the Neceſſity of falling on the Form again. The little Niceties were once more brought on the Carpet: Some revoked the Agreement made of ſticking to the Subſtance. What follow'd, however, was more diverting. The little Niceties allow'd more room for ſhewing their Wit; beſides, this Diſcuſſion did not refer them to the Sentiment of Conſcience, but rather ſerved for an agreeable Amuſement. Thus ended the Diſſection of the *Reveries*.

Eraſtus. A very curious Gazette!

Crito. Fortunatus told me, this Scene proved as good to him as a Sermon. I made no difficulty of believing him. It ſhews the ſecret Averſion or Oppoſition of the Mind to all that can rectify it.

Eraſtus. It is eaſy to ſee, this Oppoſition comes merely from a want of Uprightneſs in the Will; which is afraid of every thing that may ſhew its *Falſe*. When it cannot fall on the Subſtance of Truths, it cavils about the Form. Nothing is ſo induſtrious, or ſo fertile in Inventions, as a falſe Will, for diſ-

guiſing the *True* from one's own View and that of others. It knows how to make uſe of Evaſions and Sophiſms, if it unfortunately happens to ſtumble on ſome Truths too ſimple and immoveable, it begins to ſhuffle the Cards, and Chicanery is its laſt Shift.

Philo. You told us, *Crito*, that you found this Gazette in more places than one. Who, beſide *Fortunatus*, told you this News? Did they all ſpeak of the ſame Scene?

Crito. No; there are other Scenes which wou'd be too long to relate: I had them from ſome Ladies. Several People ſaid, they were ſurprized that Men of Parts like *Crito* and *Philo*, ſhould give into ſuch *Reveries*.

I aſk'd the firſt, who made me this Compliment, if ſhe had read them. No, ſaid ſhe; but I have heard enough of them to know their value. Among the reſt, Mr. ——— a Gentleman of great Learning, was ſaying the other day, that this way of Writing was not to his taſte; and beſides, that he did not entertain thoſe Notions.

Another Gentleman, continued ſhe, an Acquaintance of yours, who paſſes for a Wit, ſaid, there were indeed ſome good things in them; but then there were many as ſilly. I have had it from others, who are Men of Erudition, that it is very evident the Author is a *Reveur:* that the Pieces are a heap of mere empty Words without Senſe. Judge now, whether I am not ſufficiently inform'd of

of the Contents of theſe *Reveries*, and have not reaſon to be ſurprized to ſee *Philo* and you, give into them hand over head?

Let us wave this Subject, ſaid I, and talk of a thing that concerns you. You told me the other day, you deſign'd to purchaſe a valuable Diamond; I have one here that will pleaſe you. Let me ſee it, ſaid ſhe. There is no neceſſity of that, anſwer'd I; firſt give me leave to blindfold you. You are very pleaſant, replied ſhe, in putting me on making a Purchaſe of that Importance without uſing my Eyes. You ſhall form a Judgment of it by mine, ſaid I. Hold there, anſwer'd ſhe; yours are too much prejudiced in favour of what you wou'd diſpoſe of.

I then aſked her, whether we ſhould ſtand to the Judgment of the Gentlemen ſhe had been mentioning. You do not imagine I will, ſaid ſhe; they underſtand Jewels as little as they do ſewing and ſpinning. Once more I beg, I may be allow'd the Uſe of my own Eyes.

I aſked her, whether ſhe obſerv'd this Conduct on all occaſions. What, ſaid ſhe, do you think it reaſonable, I ſhould blindfold myſelf, in order to borrow my Neighbour's Eyes? That is the faſhion, replied I; and, without going very far, I could produce you an Inſtance of it. Here I look'd at her, and ſmiled.

I understand your Unluckiness, said she; you would insinuate that I have judged of the *Reveries* by the Eyes of others. You are somewhat in the right; but, in short, I consider'd them as learned Men, better able to judge of them than I. Why then, asked I, do you not depend on them for setting the value on a Diamond? A pretty Question, answer'd the Lady; they have not directed their Studies that way; it wou'd be below them. Perhaps, replied I, it is not less below them to study *Reveries*. I grant that, said she; but, after all, had the Question turned on what concerned me so much as the Purchase of a Diamond, I should not have so blindly submitted to their Determination.

Do you think, said I, it is more allowable to submit blindly to the Decisions of others, in regard to the *True* and the *False*, and that you run no hazard in judging of them by the Sentiments of Men, who may commit a thousand Mistakes? You distrust my Judgment in the Price of a Diamond, because you apprehend I am prejudiced in favour of it. Do you suppose Prejudice finds no room among the Learned? I know they value themselves on being free from it. Must we take their word on this occasion? Are they sufficiently acquainted with the bottom of their own Hearts, to give a distinct account of the true Cause of their own Judgments?

That

That Science is peculiar to *Reveries*; it is all practical and experimental. Very much time is required for forming an Adept in it. It is extremely mortifying to Self-Love.

If, replied ſhe, by the Study of *Reveries* you underſtand the Knowledge of one's ſelf, or a long Study of one's own Heart; I dare not undertake to aſſure you that the Authors, whoſe Opinions I have produced, are well verſed in it. Their Studies, perhaps, are of a very different kind; they cannot take in ſo many things at once. At that rate, anſwer'd I, we ought to be content with aſking their Opinion of things in which they are converſant.

Right, ſaid ſhe; but if I am to take no notice of what I have heard ſaid concerning the *Reveries*, I ſhall not know what to think, or ſay of them when they are mention'd. That is pity, anſwer'd I. Were I in your place, I ſhould think and ſpeak of them what a Man could think and ſpeak of what he never ſaw. But, ſaid ſhe, what if I ſhould find my ſelf incapable of judging of them after I had ſeen them? Why, then, replied I, you ſhould give no judgment of them; but ingenuouſly confeſs your Incapacity.

I never acted in this manner, ſaid ſhe; and nothing ſeems to me more difficult. The Mind cannot bear to remain thus in ſuſpenſe: it loves to declare itſelf by a *Yes* or a *No*;

and has still less inclination to let others see its Incapacity, or want of Judgment.

We had a good deal more Discourse on Prejudice and the Humour of deciding, which, with several Persons, supplies the Place of Knowledge. I asked her, for instance, whether there was any demonstrative Argument in saying, with an air of Assurance, *This is not to my Taste: I do not entertain those Notions: There are some good things in them; but abundance of silly ones: They are a heap of Words void of Sense?* It must be own'd this is convincing. Here she burst out into Laughter, and left me, assuring me it was without Rancour.

Erastus. I did not expect Gazettes so material.

Philo. I think one Circumstance in the first diverting; *viz.* that the Ladies, who at first gave their opinion for examining the little Niceties, could not bear to be left in possession of that Employment in particular. Certainly some Metamorphosis was wrought in their Tastes and Ideas.

Erastus. Metamorphoses of that kind are not uncommon. Men love to conceal themselves in the Croud. Sentiments and Passions are introduced among them, the bare Names of which would be frightful.

Resisting the Truth, not being able to allow it entrance within us, employing all our Art in disguising the *True*, and varnishing

over

over the *False*, as well as in rendring Persons suspected, whose Uprightness and Sincerity are troublesome; this, in plain terms, is *Envy*, *Double Dealing*, *Artifice*, and *Malice*. Take away the Words, the Reality gives no pain; on the contrary, it affords more Relief than the contrary Qualities.

Crito. Where is the Man who could view himself one Moment in this Picture? I doubt those who most resemble it, will not be disposed to know themselves in it.

Erastus. If the Originals of such a Picture had courage enough to own it, they would soon cease to be like it. But the endeavours they use to conceal it from themselves, strengthen a Doubleness of Heart in them, which makes them impenetrable to Truth. In proportion as they stifle the Sentiments which it produces in the Conscience, it becomes more easy for them to reject what may be offer'd without; I mean, the Testimony which Persons in possession of the same Truth may bear of it.

Crito. I remember that, among *Philo*'s Objections, which gave occasion to the *Reveries*, there was one which he will now find it difficult to solve.

Philo. I understand you, *Crito.* I was so complaisant to Conscience, as to place to its account, not only Superstition and Fanaticism, but even the Spirit of Persecution. I can now say, in the point of View, in which

I ſee things, that nothing ſeems to me more oppoſite.

Eraſtus. Whence proceeds ſo great a Change in the Point of View, *Philo?* Have the mature Reflections, you have made on the Subject, undeceived you?

Philo. I have made no particular reflection on it ſince. The truth is, at the firſt glance, I ſee now things in a very different light; and perceive that I formerly took Black for White.

Eraſtus. You paſſed, however, for a Man of great Judgment.

Philo. And I pretended to be ſo; or rather, was deſirous of paſſing for ſuch, without appearing to pretend to that Character. The Word has an ill ſound; the more we pretend to Wit or Judgment, the leſs we can bear being told ſo.

Crito. The Title of *judicious* is generally eſteem'd in the World.

Eraſtus. The Reality of it is very valuable; but I doubt whether there are many capable of diſtinguiſhing thoſe who are really judicious, from thoſe who have only the appearance of being ſo.

Philo. A Man muſt be judicious himſelf, before he can determine who is or is not judicious.

Eraſtus. He muſt be ſo in a ſuperiour degree: as in every Art, when the Value of a Work is to be determined, we chuſe not

a ſkilful Journey-man, but an Adept or Maſter.

Crito. This is practiſed, when Arts are concerned; but it is evident, Men think very differently on the Subject in queſtion. The World is full of People, who would not pretend to claim the Character of judicious, and yet ſet up for Judges of thoſe who are ſo.

Eraſtus. I would fain aſk ſeveral Perſons, who every moment pronounce this Man is more judicious than that, by what Rule they judge? In ſhort, what is meant by being judicious, and what by being more or leſs ſo?

Philo. It ſeems moſt difficult to ſettle the *More* and the *Leſs*.

Crito. And yet, every one imagines himſelf capable of doing that. Nothing is ſo common as to hear it ſaid, this Author is more judicious than that.

Eraſtus. On what is the Preference we give one to another commonly grounded? On a ſecret Inclination to what pleaſes us moſt, to what contradicts us leaſt; on our Intereſt or natural Propenſities; not to ſay our Prejudices, which are often only the Conſequence of them.

Philo. You here conſider Prejudice as a Conſequence of Intereſt and Inclination. I remember you told us, not long ago, that there were ſome Perſons, whoſe Prejudices have

have been formed by others, and thus are become involuntary.

Eraſtus. I ſaid, there are ſome, whoſe Prejudices were become almoſt inſuperable by the diſadvantageous Circumſtances in which they were placed. But it doth not thence follow, that all the Prejudices formed in us by others, before our Conſent, are always involuntary. They certainly are ſo at firſt; but they afterwards become more or leſs voluntary, according as we have more or leſs the means of diveſting ourſelves of them.

Philo. Now I underſtand you, dear *Eraſtus.* You mean that thoſe Prejudices, which at firſt are only the reſult of Education, often become, at another time, the effect of Paſſion and Intereſt; becauſe entertain'd and ſtrengthen'd by them. It is certain, that moſt of our Prejudices would eaſily vaniſh, were they not rooted in ſome hidden Intereſt. The truth is, Prejudices do not paſs for what they really are with thoſe who entertain them, but for ſound Ideas. Intereſt paſſes ſtill leſs for Intereſt, unleſs it be for an Intereſt in eſtabliſhing Truth, and a Love of ſound Doctrine.

Eraſtus. We may ſay of Prejudices and Intereſt, what we juſt now ſaid of the moſt odious Paſſions. If thoſe who entertain them could call them by their proper Name, they would thus deprive them of their greateſt Force: they would not be able to ſubſiſt long, when once unmaſked. But Men make their own Chains, by beſtowing ſpecious Appella-

tions

tions and fine Colours on the Passions; and thus disguising them so long, and consequently strengthening them, they cannot afterwards disengage themselves from them.

Crito. It may always be truly said, therefore, that if a Man persists in Disorder, and in the *False*, it is because he will not see his own Situation: and that knowing his Situation, is the first Step toward quitting it.

Eraſtus. It may likewise be truly said, that false Judgments most commonly proceed from the *False* of the Will; whence it follows, that those who are not yet acquainted with the *False* of their own Will, and consequently still remain in it, are not capable of forming a right Judgment, and setting a value on things.

Crito. If they are not capable of forming a right Judgment, they cannot be judicious.

Philo. Ergo, the first Step towards becoming judicious, is to know one is not so.

Eraſtus. And, as there are very few, who do not think themselves judicious enough; there are but very few in a condition of becoming so.

Crito. A Man, who should imagine himself born a Master-Joiner, for example, would not be willing to pass through the Classes of Apprentice and Journeyman.

Eraſtus. I fear, that many, on quitting this Life, find themselves divested of the quality of Masters in the Art of setting a just value on things; and that the Apprenticeship, which they must serve in the other

World, will prove harder than it would have been in this.

Crito. What do you think, *Eraſtus*, will be the nature of ſuch an Apprenticeſhip in the other World?

Eraſtus. The Letters, which I have promiſed you, concerning the State of the Dead, will explain that matter to you better than I can. In the mean time, we may form ſome Conjecture of what that Apprenticeſhip will be, from the ſmall Beginning of it which we experience here.

Crito. Do you know that I was endeavouring to find out a ſhorter way for acquiring a right Judgment, or becoming judicious, than that of Uprightneſs of Heart? Methinks that way is too long. I perceive that the Heart can become upright only in proportion as it unveils itſelf; and this appears to me very mortifying. Self-Love would be pleaſed with a ſhorter and more agreeable way.

Eraſtus. Do you not know, *Crito*, that Men have invented the Art of making it ſo? Inſtead of ſtudying their own Hearts, taking Directions from Conſcience concerning the ſecret Motives on which they act, viewing diſtinctly the Pretexts, with which they cover their Intentions; in ſhort, inſtead of examining the Principle of their Judgments, and enquiring what makes them lean one way rather than another; inſtead, I ſay, of this long and

mortifying

mortifying way, they have abridged the whole, and made all eaſy.

" In order to acquire a right Judgment, " there is no neceſſity of Practice; Specula- " tion is ſufficient. By the former a Man " may acquire Uprightneſs of Heart: by the " latter, that of the Mind. Theſe two Qua- " lities have no abſolute dependence one on " the other; and, as there are Perſons, who " have an upright Heart, without thinking " juſtly; ſo, on the other hand, there are " ſome, who think juſtly, without Upright- " neſs of Heart. *Ergo*, in order to become " judicious, we have nothing to do with " Conſcience, or ſtudying the Motions of our " Hearts."

Crito. This is really the uſual Method of becoming judicious, or acquiring a right Judgment. This way of Reaſoning would be generally received, was it not a little too plainly worded. For who would venture to ſay, in expreſs Terms, that a Man's Heart may be upright, though he doth not think juſtly: and may think juſtly, without having an upright Heart? This Maxim has ſomewhat grating to the Ear; and ſeveral who adopt the Subſtance, would not bear the Form of it.

Eraſtus. I know it is not cuſtomary to expreſs one's ſelf ſo bluntly; and I rather deſign'd to give you a practical Language, than a diſtinct and particular one.

Crito.

Crito. Every one, who thinks himſelf judicious, flatters himſelf at the ſame time, with Uprightneſs of Heart ; and if Men were obliged, in diſcourſe, to give the preference to either of thoſe Qualities, they certainly would, without heſitation, beſtow it on the latter. They would even acknowledge themſelves very imperfect in regard to Juſtneſs of Thought ; but as to the Heart, their Uprightneſs is entire.

Eraſtus. Are we to be ſurprized that they willingly give the preference to Uprightneſs of Heart, in Diſcourſe? 'Tis becauſe they have nothing to do for acquiring it : they are already poſſeſs'd of it, and wiſh their Mind as juſt as their Heart is upright. Thus they proceed to perfect their Mind and Judgment, with all poſſible Application.

Crito. It ſeems therefore, dear *Eraſtus*, that you may eraſe out of the Reaſoning, you have made or ſuppoſed, that ſhocking Maxim ; That Juſtneſs of Thought and Uprightneſs of Heart are ſeparable : and inſtead of it, advance this ; That, though Juſtneſs of Thought and Uprightneſs of Heart are inſeparable, as a Man is already in poſſeſſion of the latter, his Buſineſs is not to labour to acquire it ; but to endeavour to perfect himſelf in the former.

Eraſtus. Certainly this Language is not ſo harſh as the other ; and I readily agree to the Exchange. It is true, it ſuppoſes the thing in queſtion ; but, after all, it is a charitable Suppoſition, and there is no danger on that ſide.

Crito.

Crito. But, would there be no danger, if this Suppoſition ſhould be falſe?

Eraſtus. All the danger would be, that on leaving this Life, thoſe, who had falſely imagin'd themſelves upright of Heart, would have no leſs to diſcount than the Man we mention'd juſt now; or rather, their Caſe would be exactly the ſame; becauſe it is decided, that Juſtneſs of Thought and Uprightneſs of Heart are inſeparable.

Philo. This Maxim will certainly paſs for an eſtabliſhed one; but not ſo well eſtabliſhed that no farther Care is to be taken or any other Steps to be made, for acquiring Juſtneſs of Thought, than for attaining to Uprightneſs of Heart.

It will be ſaid, the Application or Labour by which the Judgment is formed, is one thing; and the Conduct, by which a Man ſtrives to reform his Heart, another. One is ſpeculative, the other practical.

Eraſtus. This partly comes up to the Reaſoning, which I offer'd. This Propoſition is more ſpecious than the Maxim which *Crito* thought ſhocking.

Crito. It might be material to enquire into it a little.

Eraſtus. In the mean while, we had better enquire, whether it is not time to decamp.

Crito. I would not willingly enquire too nicely into that Point; perhaps we may find we have not a moment to loſe. However,

we

we have one Expedient for ſetting our Minds at eaſe; each of us may put his Watch back three quarters of an Hour; and thus we ſhall have time before us.

Philo. This it is to be fertile in Expedients.

Eraſtus. If you chuſe to reſt in Illuſion, I leave you all the Pleaſure it can give you.

Crito. It can afford none, if you will not bear us company; and I perceive the Pleaſure of going with you will get the better of that of deceiving ourſelves. I wiſh it was always ſo.

DIALOGUE XX.

CRITO, PHILO, *and* ERASTUS.

Crito. WOuld you think I have found, in the *Necromancer*'s Fable, an Explanation of the Propoſition, which we wanted to be examin'd laſt night?

Eraſtus. Dear *Philo*, you every day make unexpected Diſcoveries; and I perceive that, in return for the Title of Profeſſor of *Reveries*, which you have conferr'd on me, I ought to grant you that of Profeſſor of Fables.

Crito. I eſteem it a great Honour; and *Philo* is required to reſpect me in that Quality.

Philo.

Philo. I will so, when Mr. Professor has given us fresh Proofs of his Art. We are ready to hear him.

Crito. I take it for granted, you will excuse the preliminary Discourses used in entring on such an Office. I have not had time to prepare myself; and besides, they would tire you.

" To come to the Proposition, which we " undertake to examine, by an Example " taken from our Fable, it will be proper " that the Scholar, who brought it on the " Carpet, should repeat it. You, the first; " What is the Proposition to be explain'd " to-day?"

Philo. Whether the Method taken for forming the Mind or Judgment, is different from that employ'd for reforming the Heart?

Crito. " In the present Question, the " Heart and the Will are synonymous Terms. " We shall employ the latter, as more pro- " per for explaining things. Tell me; " When People undertake to judge of the " Disposition of a Country, to measure with " their Eyes in a comparative way, the greater " or less Extent of the Fields, Vineyards, " Meadows, Gardens, *&c.* in order to per- " form this well, is not one Place or Situation " more advantageous than another?

Philo. " Yes.

Crito. " Let us suppose two Persons have " the same Design; that one of them is on

" the

" the level Ground of the ſaid Country, and " the other ſtands on a Hill; which of the " two Situations is more advantageous?

Philo. " That of the Top of the Hill.

Crito. " In order to begin to go up this " Hill, muſt not the Perſon have a Will to " do it?

Philo. " Certainly.

Crito. " And ought he not likewiſe to have one for continuing his Journey?

Philo. " Yes.

Crito. " The Will then muſt be concern'd " through the whole Journey.

Philo. " Without doubt.

Crito. " And are not the Eyes alſo con- " cern'd all the way?

Philo. " They are.

Crito. " Can they diſcover and diſcern Ob- " jects as diſtinctly at the foot of the Hill, as " toward the top?

Philo. " No.

Crito. " When the Perſon in queſtion has " reach'd the Summit of the Hill, are not " the Eyes commanded by the Will to turn " more or leſs on this or that ſide; to view " ſuch and ſuch Objects leſs or more?

Philo. " Yes.

Crito. " Is it in the power of the Will to " make thoſe who have walk'd only ſome " Steps, diſcover all it can make them ſee, " who have advanced three quarters of the " way?

Philo.

Philo. " No.

Crito. " What Expedient does the Will " employ for putting the Eyes in a condition " of diſcovering an Extent of Country ?

Philo. " That of making the Man walk.

Crito. " Do you not thence conclude, that, " in proportion as this Man goes on, he diſ- " covers a larger Extent of Country ; and is " thus put in a condition of forming a better " Judgment of Objects ?

Philo. " Without doubt.

Crito. " Can you prove that, by any Cir- " cumſtance taken from the *Necromancer*'s " Narrative ?

Philo. " Becauſe the Light increaſes, as " People advance in the little Paths, toward " the Country of Light.

Crito. " To leave the Figure at preſent ; " What is here meant by the Eyes, or the " Faculty of ſeeing ?

Philo. " The Underſtanding.

Crito. " What is meant by the way to be " taken, for enabling the Eyes to diſcern " Objects ?

Philo. " The Steps of the Will.

Crito. " Whither do thoſe Steps tend ?

Philo. " Toward univerſal Truth.

Crito. " In what do they conſiſt ?

Philo. " In complying with and obeying " all the Dictates of Truth, deliver'd either " by the Language of Conſcience or that of " right Reaſon.

Crito.

Crito. "Will not one, who takes Conscience and right Reason for his Guides, become judicious?

Philo. "Very judicious.

Crito. "Here then is a Demonstration of "our Proposition; that only one way is to "be taken, and the same Steps are to be "made, for acquiring, at the same time, "both Uprightness of Heart and Justness of "Thought."

Philo. No Objection can be offer'd, and Mr. Professor is duly installed; this Catechism is better than a preliminary Discourse.

Eraſtus. I expected Mr. Professor would have examin'd me in my turn; and was studying for an Answer.

Crito. Is it proper that Mr. Professor of *Reveries* should appear here as a Scholar?

Eraſtus. Why not, dear *Crito?* A Man may be a Professor in one Science, and but a very young Scholar in another.

Crito. I yield, *Eraſtus:* I understand that were there Professors in the mechanical Arts, a Man might be Professor in Clock-making, who would be but a young Scholar in the Art of Shoe-making.

Eraſtus. You thence conclude, no doubt, that you would not apply to a Shoe-maker to know the Value of a Clock.

Crito. Neither would I apply to a Clock-maker to know the Value of a Shoe.

Philo. Now you talk of setting a value on things, or being judicious, I recollect what gave us occasion to talk on that Subject yesterday. It was the Remembrance of a judicious Objection, I had formerly made against the Authority of Conscience; I had been civil enough to place the Spirit of Persecution to its account; not to mention Superstition and Fanaticism. At present I have a difficulty to persuade myself it could ever come into my head; particularly as to what regards the Spirit of Persecution.

Eraſtus. The different Point of View, in which you at present behold Objects, shews you have changed your Place. The Will has made some progress within you toward Truth. Are you to be surprized that your Judgment is corrected by Truth, in proportion to the Reformation carried on in your Will by the same Truth? Your own Experience is a strong Confirmation of what Mr. Professor has been saying.

Crito. It is not less so of what *Eraſtus* demonstrated to us the other day, concerning the Distinction and Relation between Conscience and right Reason.

Philo. I hardly remember it.

Crito. The Substance of it was, *That the Business of Conscience in Man is to endeavour to make him upright; in order to perform that, it renders him sensible of his* False, *and*

makes him perceive the False *of his Will before it lets him see the* False *of his Ideas.*

Philo. Now I have it; and, without going very far for an Instance, I find one in what has befallen myself. When I magnified in my Imagination the pernicious Effects resulting from obeying Conscience, the *False* of my Will was the Spring, that put Reasoning and Imagination into motion, in order to give me an indifferent Opinion of a Method, which it was unwilling to pursue. The Queen * had obtained the Votes of her Parliament, and then the Parliament demonstrated, by their Council, what she wished to be persuaded of.

Erastus. It is certain that the Will has Council well formed to its Humour. *Passion*, *Interest*, *Imagination* and *Prejudice* may be consider'd as Chamber-Council, who furnish *Reasoning*, the pleading Council, with Notes. This Council, provided with so many Pieces, cannot fail of persuading her Ladyship, the Will, or rather of making her believe she is persuaded.

Crito. Our *Necromancer*, without doubt, designed to express those different Advocates or their Memoirs, by the different Colours of the Glasses.

Erastus. That may be; and when he tells us that most of the Manufacturers of the Country are employ'd in making those Glasses,

* See the Eighteenth Dialogue.

Glasses, there is perhaps something real in what he says.

Crito. Without leaving *Europe*, it appears that this Manufacture is universal. It is not rank'd among the mechanical Arts; it is so highly dignified, that even Princes take a pride in making such Glasses. All, who have any degree of Superiority over others, think they have a right to furnish their Inferiours with them of their own making.

Pursuant to this Right, Princes and Magistrates require their Subjects to take them in Civil or Political Affairs, and sometimes even in what regards Religion. Prelates and all Ecclesiastics in general require the Laity to deal with them for this sort of Goods.

Hence it is easy to guess that Masters, Preceptors, *&c.* furnish their Disciples or Scholars with them. The same may be said of Parents in regard to their Children; in short, all who have any ascendant over others, may oblige them to take Glasses of their making.

Erastus. Among the Qualities proper for giving an ascendant, Wealth and Titles of Honour are not the least considerable. Is a Man in a condition of advancing the Fortune of others, his Glasses immediately come into vogue; he reasons justly. He approves of a new Book, every one is for buying it, before he knows what it contains.

Crito. The same Effect is produced by a great Reputation for Learning; but, after all,

Wealth, Titles, and Reputation have an ascendant over the generality of Mankind, only by their relation to the Chamber-Council, or the Notes prepared by them.

Prejudice produces a Piece on the universal Reputation of some great Man: *Interest* produces several on the Advantages which may accrue from his Approbation: *Imagination* is a kind of Microscope for shewing all his fine Qualities; and the *Passions* are sufficiently justified by the unanimous Votes of the other Counsellors.

But, all things rightly consider'd, it will appear that this Gentleman, so famous for his Merit, his Rank, his Wealth, his great Genius, *&c.* was mistaken when he imagined he had an ascendant over the Minds of his Neighbours; his Merit was no more than a Pretext for putting in play the Passions, Prejudice and Self-interest of his Admirers.

Eraſtus. Could not the same Council shew the other side of the Medal, according to the Turn given by Mr. *Interest*, first Chamber-Council?

Crito. Nothing more easy. Supposing the same Person an Antagonist, *Prejudice* immediately draws up a Memorial, setting forth that People of Merit are disabused in regard to their Esteem for him. *Imagination*, in quality of a Microscope, places to view Faults so much more considerable as they were before imperceptible. *Interest* and the *Passions* unite

unite in compoſing Pieces of the utmoſt force; which will admit of no Anſwer. The pleading Counſellor has nothing to do but to work them up, and give them a new luſtre with his Rhetoric and Eloquence.

Eraſtus. At that rate, would not the ſame Perſon appear on one ſide of the Medal in the form of a Hero, and on the other in that of a Devil?

Philo. I imagine that *neutral* Perſons, who ſhould know that Man only by theſe oppoſite Repreſentations, would be very much puzzled to determine which of the two was moſt like him.

Crito. I farther imagine that *neutral* Perſons, ſuppoſing them judicious, would not undertake to determine which Piece came neareſt to an Original, unknown to them. They might indeed form a Judgment on the Report of others; but then they ought to be well aſſured that none of the Counſellors is concerned in the Affair. Even ſuppoſing thoſe, with whom they deal, too honeſt to receive Pieces drawn up by *Intereſt* and the *Paſſions*, would they be guarded againſt taking thoſe compoſed by *Prejudice?*

Eraſtus. Honeſt Men of that turn of Mind are as ſcarce and valuable as the *neutral* People, who are to diſtinguiſh them. Rather let us ſay, that Men of this ſort are the only Perſons capable of being truly neutral.

Could the Heart be laid open, we ſhould ſee that Men incline to one or the other ſide, only by their Affinity to thoſe ſeveral Counſellors, and the Memorials they receive from them. Even good Men are not exempt from this Frailty in a certain degree; and if they are leſs ſubject to it than the generality of Mankind, it is only becauſe they are better acquainted with themſelves in that point, or have a greater Diffidence in regard to the ſecret Springs, which the *Paſſions* or *Prejudice* may put into motion. How many Men, in general, pretend to a Neutrality, who have not the Shadow or even Idea of it?

Philo. Methinks the Idea of *Neutrality* ought to ſuppoſe that of Uprightneſs.

Eraſtus. It is perhaps Uprightneſs itſelf in the moſt eminent degree. I ſpeak of an entire and univerſal *Neutrality*, almoſt as hard to be found among Men, as the Phenix in its kind; for as to certain particular *Neutralities*, they are to be rank'd in another Claſs; and it is eaſy to meet with ſome of that kind in certain Caſes, where the Memorials of the Counſellors could not be admitted. Not to ſpeak of this ſort, which is of no great value; true *Neutrality* ought to have an infinity of degrees: its Apprenticeſhip is long: the moſt real is that which makes us moſt ſenſible of the difficulty of attaining it.

Philo. Neutrality is not leſs eſteem'd in the World than the quality of *judicious*; I ſhould imagine,

imagine, that, taking the matter right, one is not very different from the other.

Eraſtus. The ſeveral *Names* given to whatever is good and beautiful, are univerſally eſteemed.

Never any Man pretended to diſapprove of *Good* as ſuch, nor approve of *Evil*, as *Evil*. We are induced to reject *Good*, and receive *Evil*, only by the different Colours, with which each of them is diſguiſed.

But while Men openly reject the Reality of *Good*, they preſerve the Name of it with the utmoſt Jealouſy, frequently appearing in the oppoſite Parties, has given being to Wars of all kinds.

Some have been carried on, under pretence of maintaining Truth: others under that of doing Juſtice; and Right has always been on both ſides. In a word, from the greateſt States down to the moſt diminutive, that is, each private Family, Diviſion has been juſtified by the ſpecious Names of *Truth*, *Equity*, *Right*, &c. Words well worth preſerving.

And as Men of Penetration have been very ſenſible that in order to diſtinguiſh what is juſt, right, equitable, *&c.* a Perſon ought to be *judicious*; they have expreſs'd all the Eſteem for that Appellation, which it deſerves; every one reproaching his Adverſaries with not being able to diſtinguiſh the *True*, the *Right*, the *Juſt*, &c. becauſe they are not *judicious*.

And, as others, ſtill more penetrating, have diſcovered that it is impoſſible to be *judicious* without being *Neuter*; *Neutrality* has been canonized. Every one values himſelf on that Diſpoſition; and at the ſame time charges all of the oppoſite Party with being ſtrangers to it. In ſhort, when Terms only are in queſtion, Men are paſſionately fond of the *True*, the *Juſt*, the *Equitable*. Do not tell them of Perſons who are prejudiced, obſtinate, partial, *&c.* *In order to become judicious*, ſay they, *a Man muſt be perfectly Neuter*. This Language is common; but the Reality not ſo.

Philo. I ſhould think real *Neutrality* can never take place, while Intereſt has a Voice in the Judgments we form; becauſe *Neutrality* is the ſame as the *Equilibrium*; and the ſlighteſt Intereſt wou'd be able to turn the Scale.

Eraſtus. Judge therefore, dear *Philo*, how far we have to travel in the Knowledge of ourſelves, before we can be in a condition to judge rightly, or give Things their juſt Value; ſince all right Judgment is founded on *Neutrality* or an *Equilibrium*, and this *Equilibrium* is formed only in proportion as the Heart is wean'd from the Paſſions and all private Intereſt.

Crito. At that rate, who will pretend to be perfectly *Neuter?* Not *Crito*.

Eraſtus.

Eraſtus. Some time ago, *Philo* wou'd not have failed of applying that Character to *Eraſtus.*

Philo. I ſhould be very cautious of doing it now. I have ſuffer'd too much on the like Occaſions. Beſides, to tell you the truth, I cannot be ſo generous, as I once was, in beſtowing Perfections or heroical Qualities. I then gave them away, without any trouble to myſelf; at preſent I ſhould be apprehenſive of injuring Truth by my Liberality.

Eraſtus. You make me a Compliment, which wou'd not go down with all the World. Where wou'd be the danger, *Philo*, in your beſtowing on me ſome Qualities which I have not, at the Expence of Truth?

Philo. You will oblige me to ſpeak, *Eraſtus.* But, to let you ſee, I have not ſo ſoon forgot my Leſſon, I anſwer, that it would be dangerous both for you and for me. A word to the wiſe.

Eraſtus. This comes of not rightly underſtanding one's own Intereſt. I have given you Leſſons, which you turn againſt me, by eſteeming me leſs than you wou'd otherwiſe have done. Were it not for that, you wou'd have given me ſome Qualities, which I muſt now be content to want. You wou'd have made me *judicious*, and conſequently entirely *Neuter.*

It is true; after you had beſtow'd that Quality on me, it wou'd have been in your

power to diveſt me of it again; I ſhould have lain at your mercy in that point; but, in the mean time, I ſhould have been in poſſeſſion of ſomething.

Philo. That is ſufficient for ſetting a Value on the advantageous Opinion others may entertain of us.

Crito. You may ſay what you pleaſe, *Philo*; and as much a Lawyer as you are, you will make no great progreſs in diſabuſing Men in that point. They are reſolved to paſs for Perſons of Merit, for Perſons of an upright Heart, and a juſt way of Thinking. Whether they are really ſo or no, is not the queſtion. It is always good to ſuppoſe they are. A good Reputation can do no harm; ſo much the worſe for them, if they do not deſerve the Character; they muſt endeavour to make it their due.

Eraſtus. 'Tis pity I did not learn this Leſſon ſooner; you wou'd then have had more advantageous Notions of me. I ought indeed to have endeavour'd to deſerve them. But what Art is here underſtood? What I wou'd fain learn, is, perhaps, a compendious Art, calculated for ſaving me much trouble. It wou'd be worth while to be acquainted with it: But we will reſerve the Explication of it for to-morrow.

DIALOGUE XXI.

CRITO, PHILO, *and* ERASTUS.

Erastus. WILL *Crito* be pleased to tell us, what is the Art, by which a Man may endeavour to merit the good Reputation, he has already acquired, without deserving it?

Crito. Before I pretend to instruct you in that Art, I ought to be well versed in it myself; and as I borrow'd what I said of it yesterday from a certain Person, I thought I ought to have recourse to the same Author for the Explication. With that view, I went to him early this Morning; and the Conversation turn'd of itself on the Point in question. He repeated his former Arguments; I at present wave the Repetition of them. I begg'd of him to explain what he meant by those Words, *Endeavouring to merit the good Reputation, one had already acquired, without deserving it.* He told me, it was labouring to acquire Uprightness of Heart and a just way of Thinking. I then asked him, whether he look'd on this as the Work of a few days? Whereupon he replied, that, on the contrary, he was of opinion it wou'd require much Time.

The Man in question, then, said I, will find it a laborious Task to merit the Reputation, which he has acquired without deserv-

ing it; or, to ſpeak more properly, which he has uſurped; for all unjuſt Poſſeſſions are really ſo many Uſurpations. He did not diſagree with me.

Thereupon I aſked him, whether the leaſt Degree of Uprightneſs doth not require us to reſtore what we poſſeſs unjuſtly? A pleaſant Queſtion! ſaid he. That is the firſt ſtep towards it. Which, continued I, is reckon'd the greater Good in the World; the Reputation of Integrity and Judgment, or the Poſſeſſion of ſome hundreds of Piſtoles? Can any Man make the Compariſon? ſaid he. None but thoſe, who are Slaves to Avarice, are capable of giving the Piſtoles the preference.

Would you not, replied I, look on a Man, who ſhould unjuſtly poſſeſs an hundred *Louis-d'Ors*, and refuſe to make reſtitution, as one void of Uprightneſs? Is that a Queſtion? ſaid he. How then, aſked I, ought he to be called, who ſhould unjuſtly poſſeſs the Reputation of an upright and judicious Man, without being willing to part with it? Would you ſtyle him juſt or unjuſt? Unjuſt, replied he.

Is Injuſtice a Good, or an Evil? ſaid I. He readily pronounced it an Evil. Is not what is an Evil, hurtful? replied I. Very hurtful, continued he.

Agree with me then, anſwer'd I, that a good Reputation, unjuſtly acquired, may be hurtful;

hurtful; and that if we are obliged to endeavour to deserve it, we ought to begin with, as much as in us lies, those whom we may have deceiv'd by false Appearances.

Here my Gentleman had nothing to answer; and was obliged to own that a Reputation, established on the *False*, cou'd not be good. However, to have something to say, he added, that several wou'd not understand how to go to work in this Affair of disabusing the Public; they wou'd enquire whether they were to make Proclamation, *&c.*

I observed to him, that this Objection carried us a little out of the Question, which was, Whether *a Reputation established on the* False, *ought to be consider'd as a Good or not?* The Business at present is rather to know what we are to think, than what we are to do. But as a different way of Thinking must necessarily have an Influence over the Conduct, it is natural that the Language should savour of it; and that a Man, for example, whose Maxims have imposed on others, should disabuse them.

Uprightness produces a Love for Truth. As soon as a Man loves Truth, he loves it both in regard to himself and his Neighbour; and is thereby obliged to disabuse him of all the *False* he may have occasioned in his Ideas, and even in his Conduct. Here we were interrupted, and the Discourse ended.

Erastus.

Erastus. I hate those Impertinents, *Crito*; methinks you were going on finely. There is hardly any Subject on which Men commit more mistakes, than that of Reputation, well or ill acquired; though it be grounded on the *False*, it is still good in their Opinion. They do not observe that they thus call an unjust Thing a Good, because they are unacquainted with the close Relation between the *False* and the *Unjust*, as likewise between *Uprightness* and *Truth*.

Crito. Here is a Remark to be made. Reproach a Man with considering an unjust Thing as a Good, he will deny the Charge with some indignation. Give the Affair another turn, and ask him whether he doth not seek to be esteem'd more than he deserves, he will own he does; for Men do not comprehend that whatever is founded on the *False* is unjust, and that whatever is unjust derives its Origin from the *False*.

Philo. I should like to see that Thesis explain'd; that is a Task for a Professor.

Crito. Do you direct your Discourse to *Crito?* I beg you will be pleased to remember, he is only Professor of Fables; and that a Thesis of this nature ought to fall under the Cognizance of Mr. Professor of *Reveries*. It was to him I proposed it; and I must confess I deserve to be laughed at for starting a Thesis, which I am incapable of explaining thoroughly.

Erastus.

Eraſtus. No doubt, you ſend the Ball back to me. Take notice that it is not the buſineſs of a *Reveur*, gravely to undertake the Explanation of a Propoſition. Should he attempt that Taſk, he wou'd acquit himſelf of it much like the Aſs with the Doctor's Cap.

Crito. I think, however, that this *Reveur* ſometimes manages a Subject pretty well.

Eraſtus. If ſo, it is certainly by chance. He never learnt the Art of Reaſoning: he is a Stranger to all Method; and it is not without reaſon that he is accuſed of being no Logician.

Philo. You are one, however, *Eraſtus*; juſt as thoſe who have never learnt to fence, know how to uſe their Swords on occaſion. Methinks, though you have not learnt the Art of Reaſoning, you underſtand how to handle an Argument.

Eraſtus. Do you think, *Philo*, my Arguments, when taken to pieces and reduced to Form, are always the moſt juſt? I do not offer them as ſuch. I adviſe you to be on your guard. I perceive this Compliment doth not hit your Taſte; and that you would aſk me where ſomething of Certainty may be found.

Philo. You enter into my Thoughts, *Eraſtus*; and I know ſome, who, on hearing you talk in this manner, wou'd believe you in great danger of falling into an Error. If, ſay they, you are not aſſured that your beſt Arguments

ments are free from Miſtakes, how can you be certain of having diſcover'd the Truth by ſuch Arguments?

Eraſtus. This might be a proper Queſtion, did I make that uſe of Reaſoning which they imagine. I ſhould call this, putting the Cart before the Horſe. In natural Things, we reaſon on what we ſee and perceive; but do not ſee or perceive the Conſequences of ſuch Reaſoning.

Thus, for example, the bare Senſe of Smelling informs me, there are Pinks and Tuberoſes in this *Parterre.* I ſee them at one glance of the Eye. I then reaſon on what I ſee and ſmell; thence I judge of their different Qualities, of the Seaſon when they were planted, of the Manner in which they have been cultivated, and how long they may continue.

In the ſame manner I reaſon, when I wou'd unfold a Truth, of which an Attention to right Reaſon has given me a glimpſe; not with a View of determining by Argument, concerning the Dictates of right Reaſon.

Hence it is eaſy to diſcover the difference between Reaſoning and right Reaſon. Right Reaſon ought to be the Principle of Reaſoning; but Reaſoning can never be the Principle of right Reaſon: becauſe to make an Argument juſt, it muſt be eſtabliſhed on the *right Rule*, without which it never will be right. If ſo, all Reaſoning independant of the ſame

Rule

Rule is false. If it is false, how can it lead to what is true, or serve as a Principle to right Reason?

Philo. May it not be said that the multitude of contrary Arguments, with which the World is over-run, comes from the same Source? Men have undertaken to make their way to right Reason by arguing, instead of taking right Reason for the Principle of their Arguments.

Hence it is, that, in opposite Parties, those who are most dextrous in the Art of Reasoning, have only made the Division wider; every one chuses some particular way of Reasoning, for his Principle, which serves as a Foundation to an Infinity of others.

Eraſtus. At the same time, every one pretends that right Reason is the only Principle of his Reasoning; this is evident from Experience. What is *One*, cannot occasion Division: but what is *One*, is *Simple*; and right Reason is but little known in its Simplicity, which is the Essence of it; and by that alone it is invariably right, and exempt from all Contrariety and Mistakes. In a word, should it cease to be simple, it wou'd no longer be right Reason.

Philo. And that, if I am not mistaken, because *primitive Truth* is simple, and right Reason is only a Ray or Emanation of that Truth.

Crito.

Crito. If right Reason is simple, it is *universal*; if *universal*, all Men ought to have a right or be in a condition to consult it.

Eraſtus. All Men have a right to consult right Reason; but very few have the Diſpoſitions requiſite for ſo doing. *Neutrality* or an *Equilibrium* is the Baſis of it: This *Equilibrium* is formed only by the Uprightneſs of the Will, a freedom from Paſſion and Prejudice which turn'd the Scale on their ſide.

Before the Will can be free from the Paſſions, and Prejudices to which it is a ſlave, it muſt feel the Power they have over it. In order to perceive that, it muſt allow Conſcience to ſpeak, to unveil its hidden Motives, and lay open its moſt ſecret Intentions.

This is the Buſineſs of Conſcience, which corrects the *Falſe* of the Will only by ſhewing it; and the Will becomes upright only, ſo far as it conſents to ſee that *Falſe* ſuch as it is, and no longer ſeeks for pretences to juſtify it.

This is the firſt Step the Will makes in Uprightneſs, it thus enters the beginning of the *Equilibrium*; and though that cannot be complete ſo long as Prejudice and Paſſion ſubſiſt, it takes place, in ſome degree, when the Will miſtruſts their Suggeſtions, and refuſes to liſten to them.

This beginning of an *Equilibrium* enables us, in ſome meaſure, to hear the Dictates of right Reaſon; and the Language of right

Reaſon

Reaſon takes place in proportion, as that of Prejudice, Intereſt and Paſſion loſes ground.

When the latter is ever ſo little liſten'd to, it, by its Diffuſion and Multiplicity, produces a Noiſe and an Emotion, which fills the whole Capacity of the Underſtanding; ſo that it can no longer diſtinguiſh the ſimple Language of right Reaſon. If we pretend to form an Argument, while in ſuch a Diſpoſition, it will be raiſed on the Language of Paſſion, Prejudice or Self-Intereſt; and how ſpecious ſoever it may appear, it can never be juſt.

The Concluſion is eaſy; that an Argument is more or leſs juſt, as the Will is more or leſs upright.

Crito. It may likewiſe be concluded, that, before a Man can reaſon juſtly, he muſt be willing to be thoroughly acquainted with his moſt ſecret Intentions, and the moſt hidden Springs of the Judgments he forms.

Eraſtus. And what can penetrate through ſo many Covers? Shall it be Reaſoning? But they are made by Reaſoning itſelf, with the Colours it gives to Illuſion. We have already ſeen that Reaſon can be juſt only in proportion as the Doublings of the Heart are unfolded. How ſhall we reconcile this?

I wou'd fain know whether the Diſcovery of our moſt ſecret Intentions is to be effected by a juſt, or by a falſe way of Reaſoning. It will be replied, that this muſt be performed by juſt Reaſoning. But, then, how can it be juſt, if a Man is unacquainted with the ſecret Springs that

may

may form it; or with the Pretexts drawn over his Intentions, in order to dreſs them up in fine Colours? At that rate, it muſt be ſaid that Reaſoning ought to be juſt, before it can poſſibly be ſo.

Philo. This is an Explanation of what was ſaid in the Letters on Conſcience, concerning the Authority it ought to be allow'd over Reaſoning; and ſhews that that Authority doth not aboliſh the due uſe of Reaſoning, much leſs that of right Reaſon.

Crito. Might not this likewiſe explain the Paradox, almoſt univerſally receiv'd in the World? I ſpeak of the different Manners in which Men reaſon, where their own Intereſt is not concerned, and where Prejudice and Intereſt may have ſome ſhare. In this point, thoſe who are beſt verſed in the Art of exact Reaſoning, differ ſo much from themſelves, that one cannot be enough ſurprized at it.

Eraſtus. This indeed is the Knot of the Queſtion. It cannot be denied that Men of a certain Genius commonly reaſon juſtly, where they are neuter. In a Point of Law, for example, they will be ſufficiently capable of diſtinguiſhing what is juſt from what is unjuſt. So likewiſe in natural things, particularly in what we call Mathematical Truths, they reaſon very juſtly.

But the Caſe is widely different wherever their Paſſions are intereſted, and in every thing proper for juſtifying or unveiling them.

Here

Here Religion comes in, which concerns the whole World. But where shall we find Men truly neuter in regard to Religion? I know not whether there is any Case where Neutrality is harder to be met with.

Philo. Men are indeed concerned on a thousand Considerations to look at Religion in a certain Point of View. Every one sees what he has a mind to see, when he doth not mistrust the hidden Principles, which may determine his Judgment.

Eraſtus. Those *secret Principles*, those *fine Springs*, which put the whole Machine into motion, without being perceived, cannot be discovered, but by the simple Language of Conscience.

This active Language, without entring into Particulars, makes a Man sensible how false the Motives are, on which he pretends to proceed. Were it allow'd to go farther, it wou'd, on particular occasions, let him see what makes him incline more to one side than to another. It wou'd plainly shew the real Bottom of the Intention, of that pretended good Intention, which is no more than a Pretext, with which the true Intention is disguised.

Crito. Men do not care to go too deep in such Enquiries. The most penetrating Understanding is here quite blind; so that it must be own'd that Penetration is not employ'd in these Points. Let it be used without,

out, as much as you pleaſe, in the moſt difficult Sciences; the Knowledge of what paſſes in the inmoſt Receſſes of Men's own Hearts, is of leſs importance.

Philo. Or rather, it wou'd give them too much Mortification; they wou'd not purchaſe the Character of being judicious ſo dearly.

Eraſtus. You are miſtaken, *Philo.* They are not in the humour of quitting that Character; and though they do not deſerve it on that ſcore, they may on ſeveral other accounts.

Crito. You mean, *Eraſtus*, that they may be very judicious in every thing, which doth not fall under the Cognizance of Conſcience.

Eraſtus. If you pleaſe, *Crito*, you may add, And in every thing, where they are not intereſted either directly or indirectly. I here ſpeak of thoſe whom you ſuppoſe always without themſelves, and conſequently but little attentive to the ſecret Springs which determine their Actions.

It is no hard matter to comprehend that Perſons of this ſort, having no good Information of what paſſes within themſelves, cannot diſtinguiſh the Language of Paſſion or Intereſt from that of right Reaſon. In all other reſpects they may be allow'd the Title of *judicious*; and there are few People who are not leſs or more ſo in their reſpective

tive Professions, when they have applied to them seriously.

Philo. For the same reason, if Men applied themselves heartily to the Study of what passes within themselves, they wou'd soon become judicious in those things which fall under the Cognizance of Conscience, and in every thing in general, where Religion is concern'd.

Erastus. You go on a great pace, dear *Philo.* In order to be judicious, wherever Religion is concern'd, a Man must have made a considerable progress in the Study of himself, in that Uprightness and Disinterestedness, which form the *Equilibrium*, and without which he can be judicious only in a narrow and limited manner: There is an extreme distance from the first degree of the *Equilibrium*, to that entire *Equilibrium*, by which a Man is enabled to distinguish the *True* from the *False* in all regards, and set a just value on every thing.

Philo. You see, *Erastus*, that I reason like a young Scholar, who is not thoroughly acquainted with the Nature of a Work: the Business is soon done in his Imagination. I understand that, with a beginning of Uprightness, a Man may be judicious enough for himself to discern by the Sentiment of Conscience, and an Attention to right Reason, the *Just* and the *True* in relation to himself, and what he ought to admit or reject. But how

how far is it from this point to that diſtinct and univerſal View, which can only be the Effect of an entire *Equilibrium.* On that foot, the poor young Scholar, *Eraſtus*, will have much Work cut out, before he reaches it.

Eraſtus. Let us ſhake hands on that Article, *Philo*; and though you have been pleaſed to honour me with the Character of Profeſſor of *Reveries*, I own myſelf ſtill a young Scholar, in regard to the Diſpoſition in queſtion.

Crito. It is not long ſince, I ſhould have been tempted to call *Eraſtus* a very judicious Man in all reſpects.

Eraſtus. You wou'd then have had the pleaſure of ſhewing yourſelf very judicious; as you wou'd have been capable of judging *Eraſtus* ſuch in all reſpects.

Crito. It happens luckily for us both, that we are excuſed giving one another the Lye in an obliging manner. Each of us ought to be believ'd on his word, how much ſoever he may ſpeak to his own diſadvantage.

Philo. From this time, there is no danger that either of us will be inclined to exaggerate.

Eraſtus. This is another advantage reſulting from the Bargain we have made; Exaggeration being extremely oppoſite to a juſt way of thinking.

Crito. I was juſt now thinking of the Diſcourſe, I told you we had laſt Night concerning

cerning Reputation. Methinks *Eraſtus* has hitherto omitted nothing, that might undeceive us of the too advantageous Ideas we might entertain of him. I know ſome, who would think in a different manner, and tell us, that in order to give more weight to the Truths he is explaining, we ought to conceive a more exalted Idea of his Merit and Judgment.

Eraſtus. This is laying the Intereſt of Truth to heart. On this foot, you need only dreſs me in thoſe fine Qualities, which I have given up; and then all I can ſay to you will be of a very different value. You will immediately conſider me as a Model for your Imitation: Your Ideas will be moulded in mine; and you will become faithful Copies of ſo perfect an Original.

This it is to be able to do honour to Truth by the univerſal Reputation a Man has acquired. The Queſtion does not turn at preſent, on the private Advantage that may be reaped from ſuch a Reputation; but on the Intereſt of Truth, which is ſupported by it.

Crito. We ought to omit nothing in our power for procuring ſo deſirable a Good.

Eraſtus. Our Reaſon ought to run thus: " Truth is the greateſt of all Goods: all that " can contribute to its being receiv'd by o- " ther Men, is conſequently a Good. Re- " putation is of that Claſs: it gives weight " to Truth, and ſerves to do it honour.

" *Ergo*, Reputation ought to be eſteem'd as " the greateſt of Goods."

Philo. This is a demonſtrative Argument, eſpecially when employ'd by the Chamber-Council. *Eraſtus* ſhall unfold the Conſequences of it more at large.

Eraſtus. That ſhall be done to-morrow, if you pleaſe. It is time to break up the Aſſembly for the preſent.

DIALOGUE XXII.

CRITO, PHILO *and* ERASTUS.

Philo. WELL then; it was determined laſt Night, that Reputation is the greateſt of Goods; ſince it is the means for doing honour to Truth. This being once allow'd, I know not how *Eraſtus* can juſtify his own Conduct. He has hitherto taken a contrary Method. He ſeem'd yeſterday inclined to act differently, when he obſerved to us, that his Arguments might want Juſtneſs, and adviſed us to be on our guard in that Point.

Crito. It muſt be acknowledged, *Eraſtus*, that, after ſuch Warning, your Arguments will not have ſuch weight with us, except for the Intereſt of Truth, you take care to reſtore them to their former Reputation.

Eraſtus.

Eraſtus. But, ſuppoſing the Intereſt of Truth, and the Credit of my Arguments, ſhould chance to be two diſtinct things?

Philo. Why ſhould they be conſider'd ſo, *Eraſtus?* Have your Arguments any other tendency, than that of ſetting Truth in a proper light?

Eraſtus. And ſuppoſing that, inſtead of placing Truth in a proper light, they ſhould only obſcure and confine it.

Crito. That is not your Deſign, *Eraſtus.*

Eraſtus. Moſt certainly it is not, *Crito.* And, to convince you that I am a ſtranger to ſuch a Diſpoſition, I wiſh you wou'd conſider Truth as entirely independent of my Arguments. Thus it will be out of the reach of all I can ſay for confining and obſcuring it.

This was the end of all I may have ſaid to make you miſtruſt them; and I think the Love of Truth requires that, if I cannot be ſerviceable to it by my Arguments, I ſhould, at leaſt, avoid injuring it by them, and appriſe my Friends of the value they ought to ſet on them.

Philo. This is a way of having the Intereſt of Truth at heart, which I ſhould not have thought of.

Crito. We were much out in our reckoning, I perceive. We imagined that the Intereſt of Truth required *Eraſtus* ſhould make his Arguments valuable; whereas, on the

contrary, he shews us that the Love of Truth requires he should discredit his own Arguments, that it may not in the least suffer by their want of Justness.

Philo. At that rate, he wou'd prove that the Interest of Truth has no connection with that of his Reputation. Whence it would follow, that Reputation being no longer a proper means for doing honour to Truth, it ought not to be esteem'd as the greatest of Goods.

Reconcile yourself to yourself, dear *Eraſtus*; or at least, reconcile the Contrarieties in your way of Reasoning.

Eraſtus. This shews what value you ought to set on it, since it is self-contradictory. One side must certainly be false.

Philo. Let us know, *Eraſtus*, on which of the two we are to depend.

Eraſtus. Should I tell you that, *Philo*, you wou'd judge of them by my Eyes; and I think it is your Interest to make use of your own in this case.

Philo. Well, *Crito*; to which of the two Arguments shall we give the preference? To that which maintains that the Interest of Truth requires a Man should support his Reputation, and the Justness of his Reasoning; or to that which, on the contrary, maintains that the greatest Interest of Truth requires he should consider it as entirely independent of any one's Arguments and Reputation?

Crito.

Crito. How ſhall we begin the Enquiry? Shall we diſſect each particular Term? Shall we give each of thoſe Arguments all the different Forms of which they may be ſuſceptible?

Philo. Rather, *Crito*, let us firſt enquire which of the two is moſt to our taſte, and which ought to carry the Prize. After that, we will beſtow a Form on it that ſhall fully demonſtrate it.

Crito. This is hitting the Mark, and underſtanding one's own Intereſt at the ſame time. But, methinks *Philo* and I have play'd the Comedians ſufficiently for to-day; and that the Parts we have acted may give us occaſion for ſerious Diſcourſe.

Philo. In the mean time our Profeſſor of *Reveries* ſeem'd to take no notice of us; but though he put on a grave Face, I could ſee him laugh in his ſleeve.

Eraſtus. I had a mind to ſee how long the Scene would laſt; and found it too inſtructive to interrupt it.

Crito. It may ſerve to ſhew that the Art of Reaſoning is of great uſe for demonſtrating all a Man deſires ſhould be true.

Eraſtus. Reaſoning might likewiſe be employ'd by thoſe who have diſcover'd the *True*, in order to explain it to others.

Philo. But how ſhall it be known who have diſcover'd the *True?* All Arguments

wear the appearance of it; and yet the moſt ſpecious are frequently the moſt falſe.

Eraſtus. And thoſe which are moſt juſt in Subſtance, may eaſily be defective in Form. I think, after all, that the Queſtion muſt be decided by the Uprightneſs of thoſe who make them, and that of thoſe who examine them.

Crito. I imagine ſuch as make uſe of Reaſoning, only with a view of explaining the *True*, do not make choice of the moſt compound Arguments. The *True* ought to have in itſelf an Evidence far ſuperiour to what Art can produce.

Eraſtus. Neither the Compoſition nor Subtilty of Arguments, are Prejudices in favour of the Uprightneſs of the Diſputant. 'Tis the common ſhift of ſuch as fear a ſtrong Light, both for ſeeing others and themſelves.

This might be termed throwing Duſt in a Man's Eyes; were not the Compariſon of the *Glaſſes* more ſignificative on this occaſion. Duſt thrown into the Eyes incommodes or dazzles them, without diſguiſing the Objects. The Glaſſes produce a more agreeable Effect; they magnify or diminiſh the Objects at the ſame time, that they colour them. Such is the effect of ſubtile and compound Arguments.

Arguments of this kind are either employ'd for explaining the *True*; or have a tendency

tendency to varniſh over the *Falſe*. If the latter, we may thereby judge of their value: if the former, they are fitter for obſcuring than demonſtrating the *True*.

Compound Arguments ought to be ſuſpected on all accounts; if they are not pernicious, at leaſt, they are ſuperfluous. They may be ranked among that Multitude of Words, which *Solomon* conſiders as contrary to Uprightneſs. Simplicity is inſeparable from Uprightneſs; if it is not one and the ſame thing.

Philo. This is certainly the Senſe of the Words of the Goſpel: *If thine Eye is ſimple, thy whole Body will be enlighten'd.*

Eraſtus. The *Evil Eye*, which is oppoſed to it, in like manner ſignifies the Diſpoſition of one who ſquints or looks aſide; one who will not ſee things as they are; in ſhort, one who fears Day-light, and winks with his Eyes to avoid the ſight of it.

Crito. This is evident to the Senſe; and I am perſuaded that every Man has more or leſs experience of it. I can ſpeak of my own in this caſe. I am ſenſible I have a thouſand times reaſoned with deſign of dazzling myſelf, and defending myſelf againſt a certain *Je ne ſçai quoi* that condemned me. At other times, I have multiplied Arguments to diſguiſe certain Truths, which I was unwilling to admit, and conceal from my own

view the ſecret Principle which prompted me to reject them.

Philo. This has long been my caſe in regard to what *Eraſtus* ſaid on Conſcience and Sincerity. I aſk'd him for Explications, one after another; but ſtill ſome Obſcurity remain'd, ſome Difficulty was ſtill unreſolved. He wou'd have ſerv'd me very rightly, had he only anſwer'd me with the common Proverb, *No one is ſo deaf, as he who will not hear.*

I muſt tell you one thing, which ſerved me as a Pretext for reſiſting what I perceived but too true. When *Eraſtus* gave us to underſtand that Conſcience was his only Maſter, I imagined he admitted its Voice, excluſive of that of right Reaſon. All he ſaid of Reaſoning, I applied to right Reaſon; and could not conceive how Conſcience alone cou'd teach all *Eraſtus* told us he had learnt in his School.

Eraſtus. I muſt own I have been all along very careleſs in the choice of my Terms, or the manner of expreſſing myſelf.

I have acted ſomewhat like a Man, who, ſhewing the Key of a Cloſet adorned with valuable Paintings, ſhould ſay that Key gave him the Privilege of ſeeing them. It wou'd eaſily be underſtood, however, that he could not ſee them without opening his Eyes, and without the Aſſiſtance of the Light.

When

When I was ſpeaking of the School of Conſcience, in my Letters or *Reveries*, I ought to have ſaid, that I conſider'd Conſcience, or Uprightneſs in obeying it, as the Key of true Knowledge, as the *Introduction to all Truth*; only the Term *right Reaſon* was wanting; the reality of it was ſufficiently implied.

Philo. You remind me, *Eraſtus*, that in the ſame place, mention is made of the *Equilibrium*, as an Effect of the ſame Uprightneſs: *that by this* Equilibrium *the Falſe in Ideas, or Opinions, inſenſibly falls to the ground*; that by it we are better enabled to diſcern the *True*.

I know not where my Eyes were, when I did not ſee that the whole ended in right Reaſon. But I was like thoſe Scholars, who muſt be queſtioned in the very Terms of their Catechiſm, and are quite loſt when put out of that road.

Crito. How many Scholars, who go not to School, are on the ſame foot! Preſent the *True* to them, diveſted of certain Terms, which they look on as ſacred, they are at a ſtand; they exclaim againſt Hereſy and Innovation. Give them back the ſame Terms without the Things, and they are pacified. This is the ſound Doctrine, to which they are to ſtick faſt.

Eraſtus. I acknowledge that a *Reveur* like me would be violently ſuſpected by Men ſo

regular in Terms. One while he would be charged with Heresy; another, with false Reasoning, with contradicting himself, and having no regular Method and System. Ought this to be matter of Surprize? A *Reveur* never was systematical; he thinks without Method, and reasons in the same manner; so that he will not undertake to warrant the Justness of his Thoughts and Arguments; he leaves his Friends to judge of that. Nor will he answer for Heresy; as he is not infallible, he is not secure from Error.

Crito. Here Mr. Professor of *Reveries* leads us into a fine Labyrinth.

Erastus. I am doing just the contrary, dear *Philo*; and were you in one, the Warnings I have given you would be proper for leading you out of it.

Philo. Do you call this leading us out of it; when you are making us distrust both your Arguments, and the very things, which seem'd to us most evident?

Erastus. By teaching you to distrust my Arguments, I take nothing from the Evidence of Things. I leave you room to see it in itself, independent of my Arguments. Thus you are freed from the Slavery of Turns and Expressions, calculated rather for cramping, than demonstrating the Truth.

You are placed in a condition of daring to view it in a *simple* and *unlimited* manner, suitable

suitable to what it is in its simple and universal Origin.

Hence you may descend to distinct or particular Truth, consider what is essential in each of them, and how they are relative on one side to simple Truth, and on the other to intelligent Creatures.

You may likewise distinguish among particular Truths, such as are more accessory or more foreign to primitive Truth; such as have had a beginning, and must cease to be of use, after they have served as indirect means for conducting Men to Truth. Of this sort are the historical Facts, and an infinity of particular Circumstances contain'd in the Scripture, as so many Testimonies which Truth bears of itself.

You will view those Truths in as simple a manner as the nature of each will permit. By considering them in their *Principle*, in their *End*, and in their *Use*, you will strip them of all the borrow'd Forms with which Opinion has cloathed, not to say disguised them.

You will venture to think on this Subject, without framing your Ideas on those of others. You will not dismiss the Idea of the *True* or *Evidence*, when it shall offer itself, under pretence that some able Men have thought differently, or perhaps have proved the contrary by methodical Arguments.

By an Effect of the ſame Liberty, you will no longer meaſure the *True* by your old Meaſures, by your former Ideas, which you once employ'd as a Rule for limiting or rejecting what went beyond them.

The firſt Degrees of the *Equilibrium*, into which you will enter by the firſt Degrees of Uprightneſs, will not allow you to conſult your own private Intereſt, or liſten to Prejudice, when the Queſtion turns on diſtinguiſhing the *True* from the *Falſe*.

On the ſame Principle of Uprightneſs, inſeparable from Simplicity, you will deſire to know, only in order to obey. As you make greater progreſs in Neutrality, or the *Equilibrium*, you will be in a condition of knowing all things more diſtinctly.

In the mean time, you will miſtruſt the badneſs of your Sight, and become judicious, more by ſuſpending than by paſſing your Judgment. You will be content with judging of what you certainly know, and that only when it is abſolutely neceſſary you ſhould determine on a Choice.

Is this carrying you into a Labyrinth, *Crito?* For my part, I might juſtly charge you with throwing me into my *Reveries* again by your Labyrinth. You have now had a ſample of them.

Crito. No Reproaches, I beſeech you, good *Eraſtus*. You ſhall not have one word more of the *Labyrinth*; your *Reveries* of this day have

have taught us the Secret of getting out of it; and I even defy you your self to entangle us in one hereafter, so that we shall not be able to get out of it by the help of the Key, you have given us.

Eraſtus. My Design was to guard you against the *False* which my Arguments might occasion, as well as what might come from any other quarter. In this view, I declared I warranted nothing I might have said to you.

I thought I did you a friendly Office, by engaging you, in my turn, not to see things with the Eyes of other Men; to consider them in their Substance, and independent of their Form; to mistrust the too favourable Prejudice you might entertain of me, and which might as effectually impose on you as the contrary Prejudice.

Philo. Pray, *Crito*, how shall we call this Art of indulging *Reveries* without Art, by which *Eraſtus* has, in a few Minutes, run over the Substance of all that has hitherto been said in our Walks?

Crito. It would be much easier for us to give it a Name, *Philo*, than to make a proper advantage of it. Nothing is so agreeable, in the point of view, as this *universal Plan*, free from all Systems, or particular Plans. Nothing is so agreeable to good Sense, as to venture to consider the *True* in it self, independent of the different Forms,

with

with which the Opinions of Men have diſguiſed it. Nothing is ſo beautiful as a Neutrality or *Equilibrium*, which alone can put us in a condition of forming a ſound Judgment of things.

This is the difficult Point. It is eaſy to perceive the neceſſity of ſuch a Diſpoſition; to comprehend that, without the *Equilibrium*, we ſhall always incline to one ſide: but it is not ſo eaſy to underſtand ourſelves well in that particular.

Philo. You are in it, *Crito.*

Crito. How, *Eraſtus!* Do you ſay I am in the *Equilibrium?*

Eraſtus. Not quite, as to the Reality; though you have the firſt degrees of it. I mean, you entertain juſt Ideas of the Difficulty of knowing one's ſelf in that point.

Philo. I was liſtening with all my Ears, to know what ſurpriſing flight *Crito* had taken, to get into the *Equilibrium* at once. I had flatter'd myſelf with not being very far from it. But he is brought down from his elevation, and conſequently, I too am humbled in the ſame manner.

Crito. I was examining myſelf how I travelled thither. *Eraſtus* would not perhaps have found it a difficult taſk to perſuade me I am at my Journey's end; and who knows whether, not being able to give any tolerable account of my manner of travelling, I might not have imagined it done in my Sleep? Judge

Judge now, dear *Eraſtus*, how much credit your Suffrage might have with me.

Philo. Let us judge from this, *Crito*, of our propenſity to enter into what pleaſes us. Should we be ſo honeſt and credulous on the other ſide of the Queſtion? I am afraid that *Eraſtus*'s Suffrage would loſe ground, if Mr. *Intereſt* was concern'd in the matter.

Crito. Hold; let us not touch on that String. This is too tender a Point among Friends. What have we to do with Mr. *Intereſt?* He is out of the preſent queſtion. We are talking of Neutrality, and the *Equilibrium*; and are not to ſuppoſe he can give his voice there.

Eraſtus. A very good Thought. This now is the way to ſoar up immediately into a perfect Neutrality. When we are once come to think that private Intereſt can have no influence over us in regard to moſt Opinions which we eſpouſe, it plays its part, without being perceived, and conſequently much more to its own advantage. The leſs we ſuſpect the private Inclinations which may determine our Judgment, the leſs we think ourſelves capable of Prejudice and Partiality. Thus it is eaſy to think ourſelves in the *Equilibrium*; Imagination tranſports us thither; it gives us a beautiful Repreſentation of that Situation; the Colours are at its command.

Crito. And perhaps while the Imagination is playing ſo fine a part, Mr. *Intereſt* plays his

his privately, when we leaſt ſuſpect it. In good earneſt, I find this is but too much the caſe; and if I knew my ſelf better, I might ſay more on that Subject.

Philo. I know ſeveral, who would not underſtand what relation Intereſt can have to Ideas or Opinions. They would have taken what *Crito* juſt now ſaid on that Point very ſeriouſly; and have thought it judicious not to confound things ſo unlike. Beſides, a Man loves to find his work done; and it is more eaſy to baniſh Intereſt in Imagination, than to venture to inquire what credit it has with us, and endeavour to oppoſe it in good earneſt.

Eraſtus. Men are naturally inclined to inquire into the Cauſes of what offers itſelf. They take a pleaſure in diſcovering its hidden Springs. As ſoon as ſome artfully contriv'd Machine appears on the Stage, all ingenious Perſons are immediately employ'd in finding out the Secret. They do not ſtop at what ſtrikes the Eye; they muſt know all the Particulars.

As for diſcovering the Springs, which put the whole Machine within themſelves into motion, that is not of ſo much importance; it is ſufficient that they know the outſide, and judge of it by what others think of it, or, perhaps, what they ſeem to think of it themſelves. After all, it may be ſuppoſed that a good Effect muſt neceſſarily proceed from

from a good Cauſe. Is not this a way of Reaſoning that admits of no Reply?

Crito. Certainly.

Eraſtus. Let us ſee whether we may not find ſome Objection againſt it. Every good Effect muſt proceed from a good Cauſe. We judge Water to be good at the Spring, when it is ſo in the Stream. But the Caſe is not the ſame in moral Things. In order to know whether an Effect is good or not, we muſt firſt examine the Cauſe; ſince the whole Value of the Effect is taken from the Cauſe which produces it. So that here we may alter our Theſis, and ſay, *We muſt judge of the Effects by the Cauſe, and not of the Cauſe by the Effects.*

Crito. At that rate, every one would have no ſmall Diſcount to make, eſpecially Perſons of Merit; I mean, the Actors of the wiſe World. I very much doubt whether they would be inclined to judge of themſelves in this manner. They would ſtick to the old Theſis, and, without the leaſt heſitation, judge that ſo many fine and good Effects, ſo generally eſteemed, can proceed only from a good Cauſe. This is making ſhort work.

Eraſtus. This would be convenient enough, was not the reckoning to be ſet right in the other World; where, perhaps, the Miſtake will prove more fatal than in this.

Philo. I already perceive by what I have experienced of the matter, that this Miſ-

reckoning

reckoning is a ſerious Affair. Nothing mortified me more than to ſee ſo many fine Qualities vaniſh, which I had, through miſtake, aſcribed to others. I was accuſtomed to conceal the bottom of my own Intentions from myſelf, by that pretended good Intention, which *Eraſtus* mentioned yeſterday. I took that ſuperficial Intention for the true Principle of my Actions; and was highly delighted with myſelf on being well regulated, not only exteriourly, but alſo interiourly, by the good Intention, which attended my whole Conduct. Judge now, if it was not a Mortification to me to have a Diſcount to make, and . . . .

Crito. Alas, *Philo*, we are not yet come to the end of the reckoning; I believe we have a much larger Diſcount to make, before we ſhall know ourſelves to the bottom, and be able to diſcover the ſecret Springs of our Actions.

Eraſtus. Nothing is leſs obſerved than what *Philo* has been ſaying of that ſuperficial Intention, which is made to cover and diſguiſe the real Motives of our Actions; this is what makes ſo many ſatisfied with themſelves. It is a common Maxim, that the beſt Actions, done on bad Motives, are good for nothing. It is not enough to do good; we muſt likewiſe add good Intentions. This is in every one's mouth.

In reality, this way of ſpeaking ſufficiently expreſſes the Caſe. They are good Intentions,

tions, *added*, not to say *stitched*, to what is called Good, or a good Action; they are not the *Root*, or living Principle; they serve to justify what was before determined by a hidden Principle.

However, we are very well satisfied with ourselves on these Terms, and give ourselves double Applause, both for what we call good Actions, and the pretended good Intention, which is the Principle of them.

Were it necessary to produce Examples of this, they might be easily found, without mentioning such as each of us could give from his own Experience.

Crito. I perceive it would be more agreeable to us to look for them in past times, than to recollect the Experience we have had, not to say the Experience we every day have of the matter. What say you, *Philo?*

Philo. I am intirely of your mind, *Crito*; and to take our Eyes off of ourselves, we need only look into the *Jewish* History, or into that of the Life of JESUS CHRIST, and the first Christians. Observe, for example, the Zeal of *Demetrius* of *Ephesus* for the great *Diana*, the Image that came down from *Jupiter*. What is more reasonable than to defend the Interest of the Goddess? Private Interest was the Spring that put all into motion: The Interest of the great *Diana* came in very seasonably for justifying, and even canonizing the Action of *Demetrius*.

Eraſtus.

Eraſtus. This Inſtance ſays ſomething; but it is not one of the moſt refined. The *Jews* and *Chriſtians* might furniſh us with ſome better calculated for impoſing on the World. We may gueſs from thence, that the more ſpiritual the Religion preſented to Men was, the more refined were the Pretexts they employed for ſubſtituting Appearance in the place of Reality.

Crito. Philo and I thought ourſelves delivered for ſome time, from the tireſome Taſk of ſeeing ourſelves, by looking back for what we did not care to ſee. But what is extremely mortifying, thoſe very Examples ſoon led us to that diſagreeable Proſpect.

Eraſtus. Since that is the Caſe, *Crito*, it is a ſign you was not very far from it. Thoſe who in a Review of times paſt, ſeek only to loſe ſight of themſelves, ſucceed to their wiſh. Every thing proves a Diverſion to them; and they do not ſee themſelves in the Pieces which moſt reſemble them.

Crito. Perhaps they are angry with the Originals, of which they are Copies.

Eraſtus. Nothing ſo common; but I believe we forget ourſelves. I know not which of us has brought ſome ſecret Charm with him that keeps us here ſo long to-day.

Crito. That Charge can fall only on Mr. Profeſſor of *Reveries*, formerly dignified by the Title of Magician.

DIALOGUE XXIII.

CRITO, PHILO, *and* ERASTUS.

Crito. I Have juſt left one, who has been talking to me of you, *Eraſtus*; and that much to your advantage.

Eraſtus. What is his Name, *Crito?*

Crito. Hilarius, Son-in-law to *Serapion.*

Eraſtus. He is a Man of Merit; and, among other good Qualities, very judicious.

Philo. Are you particularly acquainted with him, *Eraſtus?*

Eraſtus. I never ſpoke to him, I know him by ſight; he has a Mien which prejudices one in his favour; beſides, I have heard him very well ſpoken of.

Crito. This is being even with one another. He likewiſe eſteems you, on having heard much ſaid to your advantage; and I doubt not, but if he knew the value you have for him, his Idea of your Merit would be heighten'd. I ſhall not fail to let him know it the firſt time I ſee him.

Philo. I have heard *Hilarius* ſpoken of in a different manner. He is by ſeveral charged with Attachment, and want of Delicacy, when his own Intereſt is in queſtion.

Eraſtus. They are prejudiced Perſons, *Philo*; or perhaps have an Intereſt in talking of him at that rate.

Philo.

Philo. May it not as well be ſuppoſed that thoſe, who have ſpoken to his advantage, may be prejudiced in his favour, or perhaps have an Intereſt in crying him up?

Eraſtus. What Intereſt can they have in that? This is diving too deep into things; a Man cannot be too eaſy of Belief, when he would judge charitably.

Philo. True; but take care, *Eraſtus*, that while you judge charitably on one hand, you do not judge raſhly on the other, by charging thoſe who have ſpoken diſadvantageouſly of him, with Calumny, or bad Intentions. Enquire a little what could engage you to juſtify *Hilarius*, to the prejudice of others.

Eraſtus. Unleſs it be the Eſteem he has expreſſed for me, I know not what could be my Motive. But, dear *Philo*, will you, in your turn, inquire what could induce you to ſide with thoſe who ſpeak diſreſpectfully of him?

Philo. Unleſs it be that, being formerly concerned in a Cauſe againſt my Client, he carried it, I do not ſee what could make me ſuſpect the good things that may be ſaid of him.

Eraſtus. You and I, *Philo*, are very proper Judges of his Merit. What ſays *Crito* to the matter? He, no doubt, is neuter; and conſequently in a condition of judging ſuch Judges as we are.

Crito.

Crito. I am examining whether I am neuter or not. I ought to be so; for I never had any quarrel with *Hilarius*; and Interest can have no share in the Opinion I may form of him.

Hold; I now remember that, in a dispute which I had with *Aristus*, he professed to give into my Notions; and observed the Superiority I had over my Antagonist in certain respects. Besides, he is in my way of thinking in regard to *Trophimus* and *Gaïus*, with whom I could never agree. This is more than enough for making me exceptionable. We are all three in the same case; and must look elsewhere for a Judge.

Philo. Here now is a Scene that might furnish Mr. Professor of *Reveries* with much Matter for a Dissertation in his way.

Crito. It gives a lively Image of the Power of Mr. *Interest* over our Judgments, over the advantageous or disadvantageous Opinion, we form one of another.

Philo. When *Erastus* first spoke of the Influence which Interest might have over our Opinions or Judgments, I almost thought he overstrain'd the matter: for I then consider'd Interest only in point of Money; but I soon found that by *private Interest* we are to understand all that touches us to the quick, whatever affects us most strongly.

Erastus. We have, perhaps, all found by experience, that when our Honour or Character

was

was attack'd, we were not leſs concern'd than if our Purſe had been in danger. To take the matter right, theſe two ſorts of Intereſt are ſo cloſely united, that they may be confounded into one. Were we but a little accuſtomed to ſound ourſelves, to ſee our ſecret Inclinations and Views, we ſhould find that the Intereſt of Fortune and that of worldly Honour, are but one and the ſame Object, one and the ſame Mark, at which we aim, without thinking of it diſtinctly.

Crito. It is evident from Experience, that one is a very proper means of leading to the other. Nothing goes farther toward gaining a Man a general Eſteem, than a plentiful Fortune. As ſoon as he knows how to make himſelf honoured for his Riches, he commences a Man of Merit. On the other hand, nothing ſo much makes Men deſirous of univerſal Eſteem and Approbation, as the ſecret hopes they ground on them of making or improving their Fortune.

Eraſtus. Hence it may be concluded, that all the little private Intereſts are like ſo many ſmall Cords, which all terminate in the great Rope of Fortune, on which that of Reputation is often no more than a Dependent. When any one of theſe little Cords is touched, and we find ourſelves hurt by the Action, we do not think of inquiring into the Cauſe of it; at leaſt we do not think of going ſo far in queſt of it. The Subject which occaſions this

this Pain, ſeems abſolutely unlike the Cauſe itſelf.

Philo. Without going far for an Inſtance, what led me to ſuſpect the handſome things ſaid of *Hilarius?*

Eraſtus. And what was it that engaged *Eraſtus* to look on him with ſo favourable an Eye, and give him the Character of a judicious Man, without having ever heard him ſpeak? What induced him to tax thoſe, who ſpoke to his diſadvantage, with Calumny; and take the contrary Opinion for right *Sterling*, without knowing which was beſt grounded?

If the Perſons generally eſteemed, and who value themſelves upon it, knew what that Eſteem held by, and the Principle which produces it in thoſe who expreſs it, they would find themſelves not much obliged to their Admirers. I ſpeak of the moſt ſincere Eſteem. He who has ſuch a one for another, ſoon finds his account in it: It is ſerviceable to him ſeveral ways; ſometimes for making a ſhew of his own Judgment and good Taſte, and thereby acquiring the Eſteem of thoſe who hear him: at other times, for engaging a Return from the Perſon himſelf, either by ſome real Service, or a reciprocal Eſteem.

It is ſomewhat ſingular, that Gratitude, which is now hardly to be found among Men, is always admitted, more or leſs, in regard

to Eſteem; in that point we never miſs our aim, and may depend on a return.

Crito. I have obſerved it more than once, without being able to aſſign the Reaſon. Certainly nothing is more ſcarce in the World than Gratitude; as long as Men may expect any thing from you, they are entirely devoted to you: Are you out of a Condition of ſerving them in any thing? they are at liberty, and willingly give you leave to retire to the other World.

The Caſe is not the ſame in regard to Eſteem; we find no Ingrates on this Article. No ſooner a Man knows you value him, but he begins to do the ſame by you; and though you are not in a condition of doing him any other Service, he retains a grateful Senſe of that to the day of his Death. He eſteems you merely becauſe you eſteem him. Is any thing more equitable?

Eraſtus. Is it not poſſible to ſolve the Riddle? I fancy a little Magic would enable us to do it.

In quality of Magician, then, I unfold the Myſtery, and ſay, that theſe two Contraries have but one and the ſame Cauſe for their Principle, and may very well ſubſiſt together in the ſame Subject. This Principle is Mr. *Intereſt*, who gives only with a view of receiving, and of receiving more than he gives.

Hence it follows, in the firſt Caſe, that whatever Good he has received from any one, when

when that Person can do no more for him, he gives himself no concern about Restitution, unless he is forced to it by another indirect Interest.

Gratitude is quite out of the question. How happens it that Mr. *Interest* is so grateful in regard to Esteem? 'Tis because, in the latter Case, he gives nothing without receiving a Return at the same time. What he gives, costs him nothing; and what he receives, sometimes procures him more than Esteem. But, though it was confined to a bare Return, he would still be largely repaid his Expences; because the Value he sets on himself is authorised by the Value set on him by a Man of Judgment and good Taste. Now he cannot avoid esteeming a judicious Man, therefore nothing is more equitable than to esteem those who esteem us.

Thus Mr. *Interest* is engaged by a Principle of Justice to make a return in the latter Case, though he willingly excuses himself in the former.

Philo. Mr. *Interest* must certainly have Justice or Equity much at heart. Some People imagine they cannot agree one with the other; they are mistaken, no doubt, since the contrary is evident from Experience.

Erastus. They agree so well, that Justice and Equity lend Mr. *Interest* their Names as often as he wants them. He may even borrow their Dress on certain Occasions.

Absalom is an Instance of this. It is well

known that private Intereſt was his Counſellor in all his Actions; however, he ſtill retained a great Eſteem for the *Names* of Juſtice and Equity, and fetched deep Sighs for their Re-eſtabliſhment. *O that I were made Judge in the Land*, ſaid he, *that any Man, who hath any Suit or Cauſe, might come to me, and I would do him Juſtice* *.

Here now is a ſtroke of Mr. *Intereſt*'s Art in old times. He has made a conſiderable Progreſs ſince; his Practices are more ſecret at preſent; He knows how to render himſelf imperceptible where he has moſt Power. He appears only under the *Names* and Dreſs of Juſtice and Equity.

Crito. Hence, without doubt, ariſes that double Intention, of which we talked yeſterday. The true one is leaſt perceptible.

Eraſtus. It is certain that the real Principle, on which we act, is commonly moſt hidden. The borrowed Motives, by which we proceed on Reflection, are much more eaſily perceived.

When we have occaſion to ſay to ourſelves that we do this or that on ſuch or ſuch a Motive, it looks very like that *ſuperficial Intention*, which is only put on, and ſerves as a Covering to the real Intention.

Philo. It ſeems to me very difficult to make a juſt and diſtinct Diſcovery of ſuch ſecret Springs through ſo many Covers.

Eraſtus. Nothing from without can penetrate

* 2 Sam. xv. 4.

trate ſo far, unleſs a Principle more profound than thoſe Covers, opens a Paſſage. This Principle is Conſcience. Every one feels from his own Experience, that it alone can diſtinguiſh Reality from Appearance, and true from borrow'd Motives.

Philo. That is beyond all diſpute. I have often found that, when I was in the wrong in regard to any one, I had no difficulty in juſtifying my ſelf; at leaſt I juſtified the Goodneſs of my Intentions, and the Motives on which I acted. But as ſoon as I vouchſafed to ſound myſelf one Moment, the Language of Conſcience made thoſe borrow'd Motives vaniſh, and ſhewed me the true ones; ſo that I could not impoſe on myſelf, without calling in Reaſoning, in order to colour over what I had no mind to ſee in its natural Deformity.

Eraſtus. This comes up to the Obſervation we have often made. The Origin of the *Falſe* is in the Will; and introduced into Ideas by the Will. Truth therefore muſt begin with correcting the *Falſe* of the Will, before it can correct that of Ideas.

Here the Diſtinction and Relation between Conſcience and right Reaſon is clear. The former *ſhews and corrects the* Falſe *of the Will, by way of Sentiment:* The latter *ſhews and corrects it in Ideas by Evidence.*

Hence it appears, *Philo*, that I did not explain myſelf well, when I gave you room to think, I admitted the Language of Conſcience,

excluſive of that of right Reaſon. I conſider them as inſeparable; and if I at firſt mentioned only that of Conſcience, it is becauſe I look'd on it as the Introduction to the other.

Were I to give a more methodical Definition than ought to be expected from a *Reveur*, I ſhould ſay that it is more the Buſineſs of Conſcience to demoliſh, than to build; to make Men ſenſible of the *Falſe*, rather than point out the *True*. The Demonſtration of the *True* belongs to right Reaſon; but as the *True* can be demonſtrated only on the ruins of the *Falſe*, it follows that we are led to that Demonſtration, only ſo far as we allow Conſcience to make us ſenſible of the *Falſe*.

Crito. This Definition ſeems to agree perfectly well with what has been ſaid in the Letters on Conſcience; and methinks it gives no ſmall light to them.

Eraſtus. In order to explain things better in regard to the Office of Conſcience, we ought to go back to our Diſtinction of the *Falſe* into *ſpeculative* and *practical*. The latter is the Origin of the former; and Conſcience is in a particular manner employed on the *Falſe*, as practical.

This ſort of *Falſe*, is more eaſily underſtood, than defined; and conſequently Conſcience diſcovers and corrects it by the Sentiment. This *Falſe* is in the Will; it is the contrary to Uprightneſs and Sincerity. As oppoſite to Uprightneſs, it wilfully ſhuts the eyes againſt Truth, and endeavours to impoſe

poſe on itſelf. As oppoſite to Sincerity, it endeavours to appear what it is not, and impoſe on others.

In order to impoſe on itſelf, it makes uſe of Pretexts, Subterfuges and Evaſions. In order to impoſe on others, it uſes Diſguiſe, Diſſimulation, and all that goes by the Name of Appearances. In this conſiſts the *Falſe* of the Will, or the *practical Falſe*, on which we have obſerved that Conſcience ought to be employed.

Crito. You ſaid, *Eraſtus*, that Conſcience ſhews the *Falſe* of the Will by the way of Sentiment. I find a Proof of that within myſelf. I began to experience ſomething of it, when I told *Philo* I wanted Honeſty in regard to myſelf, and that I was made ſenſible of this Defect by a *Je ne ſçai quoi*, the Language of which was ſo true, that I could not contradict it.

Philo. It was to no purpoſe for me to put a good face on the matter; I felt the Force of it in ſpite of all my Endeavours to avoid it. I was then exactly in the Diſpoſition, which *Eraſtus* has juſt now deſcribed, in regard to the *Falſe* of the Will.

On one hand, I ſtrove to impoſe on myſelf, and thus became very dexterous at ſtarting Difficulties, and evading the Queſtion, when it preſſed me too cloſe. I then began to banter *Crito* on the Progreſs he made, or look on my Watch and tell you it was late.

However, I managed my game pretty well; and by doing my best to impose on myself, omitted nothing that might impose on others. This made me complaisant in appearance, while I was very far from being so in reality. I put on an air of Impartiality and Attention to Truth, while I heard but with one Ear, and was deaf with the other. I knew how to yield at proper times, and agree to several things, that I might not be suspected of Obstinacy. I pretended to be full of Moderation, when I was most vexed. In order to disguise the matter more effectually, I began with commending *Erastus*'s Penetration, and Justness of Judgment; by which I gained a double Advantage. I interrupted him when his Discourse hit me home; and at the same time appeared equitable and judicious. I did not care to shew my Jealousy of *Crito*; and when I pretended to detain *Erastus*, I could have wished he had fixed the next day for his Journey.

Judge now, dear *Erastus*, whether you have any need to be very long in explaining in what the *False* of the Will consists. I can talk learnedly of it in all respects; and think I may say that a want of Uprightness, by which we endeavour to impose on ourselves, causes that want of Sincerity, which prompts us to impose on others.

Crito. Can it then be doubted that Sentiment and Experience are able Masters? I am no

no longer surprized at what *Eraſtus* has so often said of them.

Eraſtus. All the Lessons which Conscience can give us, are reducible to Sentiment and Experience; and what *Philo* has just now observed, is a Proof of it.

Philo. It is certain that the Sentiment alone has unveiled me to myself. It is the Sentiment that reproved me for want of Uprightness, as well as for want of Sincerity. When I sought for Evasions, or shifted the Question, I was very sensible that I would not see, or looked on one side. In short, I found that I did not go strait forward; and when I composed myself, in order to appear what I was not, I was but too well convinced that my Heart gave my Tongue the lye.

Crito. At that rate, every Man might easily know himself. One Moment's Attention to what passes within himself, would be sufficient for letting him see how much he is disguised; and the surprizing pains we take to appear this or that, are a certain Sign of our being far from what we would appear.

Eraſtus. An Attention to what passes within one's self, is too mortifying, dear *Crito.* An Attention to the most abstract Ideas, gives us no trouble in comparison of that.

An Attention to what passes within one's self, is extremely easy to a Man, who can resolve to see himself as he really is. It requires no Dispute, no Labour of the Head. In all

these respects, it is neither tiresome nor painful. It is of so simple a nature, that, in order to express it, we ought to find another Term than *Attention*; at least if by it we understand any Application of Mind.

Man, for example, is capable of Attention in two respects, either in regard to what he feels, or to what he sees. The former is more easy, and requires no Application. The latter is more difficult; it cannot be perform'd so expeditiously, or with so little danger of Mistake.

Crito. I understand you, *Erastus*; and, if I am not mistaken, you mean that the Sentiment of Pain or Pleasure, Cold or Heat, for example, requires less Attention than is necessary for the Discovery of Objects, which present themselves to the sight. Attention to what we see, requires some sort of Application, at least for seeing distinctly the Diversity of Objects; whereas Attention to what we feel, is so quick and simple, that it is even unavoidable, unless the Machine is out of order, or the Application is very strong another way.

Philo. I believe that *Sensation*, when somewhat lively, gets the better of the strongest *Application*. How great Application soever I gave, a few Moments ago, to *Erastus*'s Discourse, I was sensibly affected with the Sting of a Wasp. I should think that *Sensation* of itself awakens the Attention.

Erastus,

Erastus. It is certain, that a quick *Sensation* naturally rouses the Attention; but when *Sensation* is half stupified, by some Disorder in the Machine, the Defect in the Vivacity of the Sensation must be supplied by Attention. But, waving all Comparisons, this may lead us too far, and prove a Rub in our way. What I meant by it, is that, in the generality of Mankind, the Sense of Conscience is very much blunted and stifled. Those in whom it is less active, want a greater degree of Attention for perceiving it.

This Attention renders the Sensation more nice and lively; and in proportion as it becomes so, it advises more by itself, than by the Attention given to it; or at least, this Attention is so simple, that it seems entirely natural. It must be allowed, however, that it is thus easy only to such as have already made some progress in Uprightness.

Philo. I see my Mistake, *Erastus*; I did not consider Men in very different Classes, in regard to Uprightness and Delicacy of *Sentiment.* I now understand that, without distinguishing the different Degrees in which they may be, in that respect, we fall into Contradictions or Confusion.

Erastus. Dear *Philo*, be pleased to understand likewise, that an Attention to what passes within ourselves, becomes every day more natural, as we accustom ourselves to it;

and thus the Senſation is made more quick and lively.

When a Man is gone thus far, all that has the leaſt Appearance of the *Falſe*, is immediately reproved and condemned. The borrowed or ſuperficial Intention, which covered the true one, will paſs no more; or, at leaſt, it is preſently known to be falſe. The leaſt Diſguiſe we employ, to impoſe either on ourſelves or others, is immediately thrown off by this nice Senſation. It cannot bear what has been invented for ſubſtituting all the Imagination forms, for procuring a falſe Repoſe, in the room of the Sentiments of the Heart, Uprightneſs, and Sincerity.

Crito. I perceive that *Sentiment* is ſtill very dull in me; and as it becomes more lively, it will make me ſenſible of what I have not yet perceived in ſeveral Particulars. The laſt thing you ſaid, gave me an Idea of it. What you there deſcribed, paſſes for Religion with ſeveral; inſtead of being placed in the Rank of the *Falſes*, it is called *Devotion*.

For my part, I was always highly pleaſed with myſelf, for riſing above Bigotry or Superſtition; but I find I am not yet free from ſeveral things, which are, properly ſpeaking, only ſo many *Subſtitutions* to Reality.

Eraſtus. The *Falſe* of this kind is, I think, moſt difficultly removed, and what we deceive ourſelves in the longeſt. This moſt effectually enables us to impoſe on ourſelves, and

and be very well ſatisfied with ourſelves in regard to Religion.

A Diſguiſe of this nature is much more ſeducing than the coarſe Diſguiſe, by which we ſtrive only to impoſe on others. Thoſe who confine themſelves to the latter, are very ſenſible, that, in the main, they are not very valuable.

The former, on the contrary, being ignorant of their Diſguiſe, and taking what is only put on or *borrowed* for *Reality*, imagine themſelves very worthy of Eſteem. They even believe they act very honeſtly; and the pains they take to impoſe on others, ſeem to them no Diſguiſe; it is a piece of well judged Prudence for maintaining the Reputation they deſerve.

Philo. We obſerved, ſome time ago, that the moſt effectual Diſguiſe is that which is leaſt perceived; that, by long Cuſtom, it becomes as natural as breathing; and I am of Opinion, that nothing ſupports it more than what is termed *Religion*, independent of Conſcience, or Uprightneſs in obeying its Dictates.

Eraſtus. It muſt be owned, that Religion, taken in that ſenſe, is fit for all manner of Purpoſes. Men are too artful, not to make uſe of it as Neceſſity requires.

I have leſs regard here to the temporal Advantages to be procured by it, than to one more material and refined. I mean, a certain

Repoſe

Repose of Conscience, at which all Men aspire, a sort of Assurance for Futurity, which removes all the Disquiets they may feel on that score. This Repose or Assurance is very necessary for enjoying the Advantages of Fortune: their Interest is not less concerned in seeking what may make them easy in their Pleasures, than in acquiring a Fortune that procures them those Pleasures.

Hence it is easily comprehended, how much all Men are interested in Religion, since it is of so universal use.

Philo. Is not this the Origin of all the most extravagant Religions? Should I say it is Conscience, I should fall into my old Quibbles. It must be said, that Conscience is the occasion of it; and that, in order to make it easy or silent, Men have substituted what they call Religion, in the room of the Reality it requires.

Crito. This is making Conscience a proper Reparation.

Philo. The Reparation would be easily made, if Words were sufficient for that purpose; they might outwardly repair the Damage I have done it by my former Accusations; but, as the Source of those Accusations was a secret Principle of Resistance or Opposition to Truth, I think the Reparation can be real only as far as I allow Truth to destroy that Principle, and thus become as susceptible of its Impressions, as I was before incapable of receiving them.

Crito.

Crito. This comes up to the *Evidence*, to which Obedience to Conſcience ought to lead us. If I am not miſtaken, *Eraſtus* meant that, by *Attention to what we ſee.* He thereby diſtinguiſhed the Sentiment of Conſcience, from the Evidence which reſults from it, or the Language of right Reaſon.

If Conſcience is employ'd on the practical *Falſe*, right Reaſon, without doubt, is employ'd on the Speculative.

Eraſtus. This is what we call reuniting Subjects. But, to begin with Attention to what we ſee, methinks it is ſo cloudy, that we may expect a heavy Shower.

Crito. And, by way of Attention to what we feel, I can tell you it is time to go to Supper.

DIALOGUE XXIV.

CRITO, PHILO, *and* ERASTUS.

Crito. I Have juſt now been entertain'd with a Scene, which has convinced me, that it is impoſſible to be judicious, without Neutrality, or an *Equilibrium.* It was acted by ingenious Men, and old Friends, but whoſe Intereſts were ſomewhat different.

Not to amuſe you with a long Detail of what paſſed, you muſt know that *Menander*, who had been informed of their Difference, undertook to make them ſubſcribe their own Condemnation,

Condemnation, without ſeeming to have them in view. To that purpoſe, he introduced a Caſe, which, in the main, was exactly their own, though diſguiſed.

He ſubmitted the Examination of it to thoſe Gentlemen, as indifferent Perſons. They maturely weigh'd the Reaſons on both ſides, and concluded, that the Matter ought to be made up; that each of the Parties ſhould make ſome Conceſſion in favour of his Antagoniſt. The reſt of the Company thought the Concluſion very judicious. *Menander* did not immediately apply the Caſe, but let the Diſcourſe turn on other Subjects. About three Quarters of an Hour after, he laid hold of an Opportunity, which offered, of putting the two Friends on their own Affair, but in a jocoſe way, as ſpeaking of what ought not to be handled ſeriouſly among Friends.

They, for ſome Moments, kept up the Raillery; but ſoon fell into the grave Strain. One of the Parties began with ſaying, the Queſtion ought to be waved; that it ought not to be diſcuſſed in ſuch good Company. The other took *Menander* aſide, to tell him his Grievances. *Menander* endeavoured to make him abide by what he had pronounced on the Caſe propoſed; but things were now quite altered, and there was no Compariſon. *Menander* then deſired him to ſhew him the Difference; here my Gentleman was puzzled. After ſome wretched Shifts, he look'd

on

on his Watch, and ſaid he had an Appointment elſewhere.

Menander then attack'd the other, who put on an Air of Indifferency, ſaid it was not worth while, and that it was a Trifle, which would be ſoon adjuſted; as a Proof of which, he obſerved, that they had not diſcontinued their Viſits one to another. All this *Menander* granted, and added, that their Caſe was exactly the ſame with what he had ſtarted; ſo that nothing was ſo eaſy as to decide it in the ſame manner. As he did not expect this Stroke, he was gravelled; he had no mind, either to depart from his former Deciſion, or retract what he had ſaid concerning the ſmall Importance of their Difference; he was reduced to make a Diſtinction between their Caſe, and that propoſed. This Diſtinction ſhow'd he had the Affair at heart, and that it was not ſo inconſiderable as he pretended.

In ſhort, not knowing how to get out of the Scrape, he was ſeized with a Shivering, which put him in apprehenſion of a Fit of the Ague; whereupon he thought it a point of Prudence to go home immediately.

The two Perſons concerned being gone, the Spectators had Matte renough before them, from the Scene, that had paſſed. But, as only two of the Company were neuter, the reſt acted a new Scene, each ſiding with the Perſon he loved beſt. What they before thought very judicious in the Caſe ſuppoſed,

was

was now quite otherwise. Each Man saw Objects with other Eyes, not to say with other *Glasses*. For my part, as I had no Inclination to enter into the Dispute, and not knowing how long it might last, I left the Room.

Philo. Stories like this are not uncommon. Every one knows, that the Point of View varies very much, according as Passion or private Interest is concerned. But, I think Men rest contented, with perceiving how ridiculous others are in the Case, without thinking to make their own advantage of the Observation.

Erastus. As long as a Man is not in the like Circumstances, he imagines himself very far from acting on the same Principle, which produces in others such effects as he dislikes. He is greatly pleased with himself, that he is not capable, as he thinks, of being influenced by a paultry Interest: he remembers that on such an Occasion he acted in a very different manner. This is sufficient for congratulating himself on the Fairness of his Character, and the Goodness of his Heart.

Crito. We should perhaps be much out in our Reckoning, if we here took the Method mentioned by *Erastus* the other day: I mean, if we judged rather of the Effects by the Cause, than of the Cause by the Effects.

Philo. But how is it possible to discover a Cause, which is commonly concealed under so

ſo many good Intentions? If that is the trueſt Principle, which makes leaſt noiſe, how ſhall we be able to penetrate ſo far, unleſs it be by that Attention to what paſſes within us, of which we were talking yeſterday? I am pretty ſenſible that is the Point; but, at the ſame time, I am as ſenſible of the Difficulty of reſolving on it, at leaſt of entirely reſolving on it, and conſenting to ſee the inmoſt Receſſes of our own Hearts.

Crito. You may add, *Philo*, that it is not leſs difficult to be willing to open the Eyes to thoſe Truths which reprove us, or may carry us farther than we deſire.

Eraſtus. This laſt Step, though difficult in itſelf, ceaſes to be ſo, when once we have reſolved to take the firſt; or rather it is a natural Conſequence of it.

The Truths which we are moſt apprehenſive of ſeeing, become painful to us, only by the Oppoſition they meet with in us: that Oppoſition is much more in our Will or Inclinations, than in our Ideas. Hence it is an eaſy Concluſion, that when we have once conſented in good earneſt, to diſcover the bottom of our Will, or Inclinations, we find no difficulty in opening our Eyes to what may reform us.

The free Conſent, by which we give Conſcience leave to correct the *Falſe* of the Will, is the ſame by which we allow Evidence to rectify the *Falſe* of Ideas.

This

This ſhews the near Relation between the Language of Conſcience, and that of right Reaſon, ſince the ſame Conſent admits both.

Crito. And conſequently, that without Uprightneſs of Will, or the *Equilibrium* which follows it, we cannot be judicious in all reſpects.

Philo. The Scene which you juſt now opened, is a pretty good Proof of that. It appears, that in general each Man in the Company was judicious enough in the Caſe propoſed, as relating to Perſons unknown; but, as ſoon as they found themſelves concerned in it, ſome perſonally, others through prejudice for their Friend, the Caſe was altered; what was before very plain and evident, now ceaſed to be ſo. In reality, there is a wide difference between what concerns ourſelves, and what relates to another.

Eraſtus. It appears from hence, that it is entirely in our own power to admit, or ſhut out Evidence, according to the Deciſion of our Will or Intereſt.

This is readily acknowledged in Civil Affairs; and if our Eyes are not good enough for ſeeing this Principle in ourſelves, at leaſt we ſee it in others. Thoſe, for example, whoſe Intereſt has ſuffered from it, can remember it; nothing is ſo fine as the Moral Reflections they make on that Subject.

" O Times! O Manners! (ſaid a Perſon " the other day, in his own Caſe) Where " ſhall

" shall we find Honesty? Men stick at no-
" thing; Conscience is laid aside. Mr.——
" knew in his Conscience, that Money was
" mine by Right; I desired no other Judge;
" I wanted some Formalities; he had them
" on his side; that is sufficient for stifling all
" Remorse, and gaining his Cause. Apply
" to the most judicious Man in the World,
" continued he, the Moment his Interest is
" concerned, he loses his Judgment, and
" begins to perplex the most simple and evi-
" dent Case."

I admired the unfortunate Gentleman's Zeal for the Interest of Justice, and the Respect he showed for the Authority of Conscience; since he desired no other Judge but that of his Antagonist. I then recollected what had been said in the *Reveries*, concerning the Art of making an advantage of one's Neighbour's Conscience, while Men give themselves but little Concern about using their own. After all, nothing is so ingenious; this is making a Testimony, that interiourly corrects others, subservient to our temporal Interest.

Crito. It seems we are resolved to make no use of what is given us merely for our own Service.

It is certain that the business of Conscience in Man is confined to reproving and correcting him; it never reproaches us with want of Uprightness in another. That other has within

within him the same Witness, who will soon make him feel him, if the Person doth not stifle all Sense of him. We are under no apprehension from another Man's Conscience, unless it be indirectly by the Obedience that other pays it; and thus gives our Conscience occasion to reproach us with the contrary Conduct.

That Case excepted, the direct Language of Conscience regards only each Man in particular. Have you had a difference with another? As soon as you enter into yourself, you feel Reproaches, not on his, but on your own being in the wrong. You may, indeed, perceive another's Fault; that falls under the Cognizance of Evidence; but Conscience or Sentiment will never reprove you for another: Its Language frequently produces the contrary Effect; it justifies to us the Person whom we unjustly condemn; shews us our Fault at large, and pleads the Cause of our Adversary.

Here Men cry up the Authority of Conscience; and endeavour to make their advantage of it; not of their own Conscience, but of that of others, so far as it indirectly concurs with their own in procuring some temporal Advantage.

This is no new Practice; we have an Instance of it in the Gospel. A certain Man, hearing our Lord speak of not setting the heart on Riches, immediately laid hold of this

this Opportunity of deſiring him to inculcate the Doctrine to his Brother, who refuſed to give him his Inheritance. Nothing could be more equitable; he aſked no more than his Right.

Philo. There is no room for doubting, that Conſcience indirectly concurs to the good of Civil Society; but it is probable, that thoſe who know it, only by the temporal Advantage they reap from it, will not have reaſon to be long pleaſed with it.

Eraſtus. They will one day be ſenſible that they have inverted the uſe of it, and that the advantage they have made of their Neighbour's Conſcience, has been very inconſiderable, in compariſon of the Injury they have done themſelves, in deſpiſing the Language of their own. They will underſtand that, if the Authority of Conſcience ought to regulate Civil Society; this can be done only by regulating the Conduct of each of the Perſons who compoſe it: that if one ſingle Perſon, refuſing to be interiourly regulated, or made upright, ſhould pretend to make a temporal Advantage of another, ſuch pretended Advantage would only render him more miſerable.

Every one will know ſooner or later for what end Conſcience was given him. It is in vain to endeavour to avoid its Acquaintance at preſent; the pains we take to blind ourſelves in that particular, ſpeaks almoſt as much

much of it, as the Language itself, which we will not hear.

Crito. Might not the same be said of the pains we often take to obscure certain Truths, or evade the Force of them? The Art we are obliged to employ on that occasion, shews plainly there is a Design, and that we endeavour to get out of the reach of Evidence.

Eraſtus. The pains we take to stifle Sentiment and fly from Evidence, are so closely connected, that they may be considered as one and the same thing. They flow from the same Principle, and have the same Tendency. That Tendency is to impose on ourselves, as we were saying yesterday; and it is impossible that the Man, who endeavours to stifle Sentiment within himself, should not at the same time shut his Eyes against Evidence.

Crito. By the Rule of Contraries, I should think it might be fairly concluded from thence, that every one who admits Sentiment, thereby admits Evidence or the Language of right Reason.

Eraſtus. The Inference is just, if you mean that every one, who allows Conscience the Liberty of correcting him, is thereby better able to form a sound Judgment of what he sees.

But it would be a great mistake to imagine, that the first Degrees of Uprightness are sufficient for making a Man capable of seeing all

all things distinctly, and forming a sound Judgment of every thing. You know better than I, that the Rule of Contraries doth not prove as much in the Positive as the Negative. For example; *I shut my Eyes, therefore I see nothing. I open them, therefore I see every thing.* Here now are the two Opposites; the first is self-conclusive; the latter requires several Restrictions to make it just.

Philo. This puts me in mind of our Catechism on the point of View, or Evidence. I understand, by the comparison of the Hill*, that Evidence must have an Infinity of Degrees, that the Point of View changes, that it becomes more extensive and more exact, as we advance; and that it would be in vain to attempt to open one's Eyes, for discovering at the foot of the Hill, what can be seen distinctly only by those who are on the top of it.

Crito. You leave me nothing more to say, *Philo.* This is not civil. To let you see I have not forgot my Catechism, I add, that the Power of the Will over the Understanding, is much more absolute in the Negative than in the Positive.

The Will may by a free and sudden Act shut the Eyes against Evidence; but it cannot in the same manner make us see Objects distinctly. In order to do that, it must have made some progress in Uprightness, by which it enters into the first Degrees of the *Equi-*

* See Dialogue XX.

librium. This *Equilibrium* muſt have an Infinity of Degrees, before it becomes entire and perfect. The Degree of Evidence anſwers to the Degree of *Equilibrium.*

Therefore when we are arrived only at the firſt Degrees, Evidence muſt be limited in proportion; and here the point of View is far from being clear and extenſive.

Eraſtus. Hence it might likewiſe be concluded, that in a point of view thus limited, he is moſt judicious, who limits his Judgment the moſt, or judges poſitively only when he is obliged to come to ſome Choice, who even miſtruſts the Judgment he forms, and is ready to correct it, as ſoon as he ſhall ſee things more diſtinctly.

Crito. At that rate, the beſt way of forming the Judgment, wou'd be not to employ it on an Infinity of Subjects, as ſeveral imagine; but rather to ſuſpend it in regard to every thing we do not know diſtinctly, and confine it to what is barely neceſſary.

Eraſtus. Precipitation in judging of what we are not in a condition of knowing, is perhaps one of the Cauſes moſt productive of falſe Opinions. The generality of Mankind judge of an Infinity of things by the Eyes of others. The moſt ſenſible Part of the World know how ridiculous this Conduct is. They make a Profeſſion of judging only of what they ſee clearly; but perhaps, they are not ſufficiently ſenſible how little they are capable of

of ſeeing, what they wou'd judge of, with their own Eyes.

Crito. They might aſk you, *Eraſtus*, whether you wou'd adviſe them to judge by other Men's Eyes.

Eraſtus. A wonderful Expedient! The thing, however, is pretty common; and the Moment that a Man is ſuppoſed not able to judge for himſelf, he is adviſed in a friendly manner to ſtick to the Judgment of Perſons of a ſuperiour Genius.

Crito. But is it not cruel to leave a Man thus in ſuſpenſe, without allowing him to judge either by his own Eyes or thoſe of others?

Eraſtus. Very cruel indeed; provided this Man's Mind is as ponderous as his Body, and he is thus incapable of ſuſpending his Judgment.

Philo. In reality, few People are capable of ſo doing; and, if I am not miſtaken, the want of an *Equilibrium* contributes not a little to this Incapacity.

Eraſtus. Take notice of one thing. Thoſe, who have already made ſome progreſs in the *Equilibrium*, and are thus more capable of judging of things, are moſt ſenſible of the neceſſity of ſuſpending their Judgment, and judge as little as poſſible.

On the contrary, ſuch as have not made one ſingle ſtep in the *Equilibrium*, and conſequently can only judge falſely, will under-

take to judge of every thing, and cannot come to a reſolution of leaving any thing in ſuſpenſe. The Propenſity of their Will is too ſtrong, not to force the Judgment.

If therefore thoſe, who are leaſt in a condition of judging are the moſt forward in judging, what weight ought to be allow'd to the Judgments of the Multitude?

Crito. The World is full of *Judges*; who, however, are continually repeating the Maxim, that *we ought not to judge.*

Eraſtus. It is no uncommon thing to find the Conduct of Men contradict their Language. But, if they wou'd be at the trouble of enquiring into the Cauſe of this, they wou'd learn to know themſelves.

May not Mr. *Intereſt* have ſome hand in this Contradiction? What Probability is there in the Suppoſition? What can induce him to judge favourably of ſuch or ſuch Perſons, but a Conformity of Inclinations and Opinions, or the Eſteem they profeſs for you *?

On the contrary, what could engage the ſame Intereſt to judge diſadvantageouſly of other Men, but an Oppoſition of Sentiments and Inclinations, a ſort of Rivalry, or a Superiority that eclipſes you.

When the Queſtion turns on Religious Affairs, how can he thruſt himſelf in; unleſs it is becauſe every Man has an Intereſt in forming ſuch Ideas of Religion, as will not diſconcert

* See Dialogue XXIII.

diſconcert the Plans he has laid down for his Conduct, or too much oppoſe his ſecret Inclinations; in a word, ſuch as will not diſabuſe him of the favourable Opinion he entertains of himſelf in all reſpects?

And who knows but the Judgments, which Men form of Religion, may not proceed from the ſame Principle, as thoſe which they form of Perſons? What at firſt ſight ſeems ſo different, may probably be one and the ſame thing at laſt.

Perhaps the ſame Intereſt, that leads us to conſider Religion in a certain Light, inclines us to judge favourably of ſuch as ſee it in the ſame View, and thus juſtify our Conduct and Opinions.

But, if private Intereſt can be the Principle that leads Men to judge of every thing, how can it engage them to ſpeak a contrary Language in the old Maxim, *That we ought not to judge*; unleſs it be done with a View of ſecuring themſelves from being judged by others? When we defend an abſent Perſon by the ſame Maxim, who knows but the Connection we have with that Perſon, and the Apprehenſion of being judged in our turn, may have ſome ſhare in the Zeal we expreſs for his Intereſt?

One thing to be obſerved is, that we inſiſt on the Maxim of not judging only in regard to Perſons, not where Religion is concern'd. In reality, every Man takes more care to

ſhelter himſelf from diſadvantageous Judgments, than to ſecure Religion againſt the falſe Judgments, which may be formed of it.

People know not, however, the cloſe Connection that ſubſiſts between Judgments formed of Perſons and thoſe formed of Religion.

They do not comprehend that, in order to judge rightly of either, a Man muſt be in an *Equilibrium:* that in order to be in an *Equilibrium*, he ought to know himſelf, be ſenſible of the *Falſe* in his Will and Inclinations, penetrate into the moſt ſecret Folds, and view the moſt ſecret Springs of his own Heart: that, till he is thoroughly acquainted with himſelf, he muſt not flatter himſelf with being in an *Equilibrium*; or, if he has began to enter it, it is only in proportion to his Knowledge of the bottom of his own Intentions.

In ſhort, Men do not underſtand that, while this *Equilibrium* is imperfect, he is moſt judicious who judges leaſt, either in regard to Perſons or Religion; or moſt miſtruſts his Judgment. He who judges only by *Maybe's* or Poſſibilities in an Infinity of things: who accuſtoms himſelf to ſuſpend his Judgment; not barely to ſay he ſuſpends it; but to ſuſpend it really in all that is above his reach: to decide nothing interiourly on what is beyond his point of View: who ſays

to

to himſelf, that, though things appear to him ſuch, they are perhaps really different; and that Truth may one day ſhew him them in another Light.

Philo. This is the Secret of being judicious, with the help of but little Diſcernment; at leaſt the Secret for avoiding falſe Judgments, is to form as few as poſſible, and even miſtruſt thoſe we do form.

I take this Leſſon to myſelf; and find it very proper for a Man who has gone no farther than the foot of the Hill, or the firſt ſtep of the Aſcent, and muſt conſequently have a very ſhort point of View. Is it not equitable, that he ſhould limit his Judgment in proportion?

Crito. I now ſee where we are. *Eraſtus* was ſaying the other day, that he had endeavour'd to make us miſtruſt his Arguments, only with a View of obliging us to ſee things with our own Eyes. But this makes me ſenſible that we are not yet in a condition of diſcovering much Ground *. That our main Buſineſs is neither to know nor judge much of things, but to go on in the Road of Uprightneſs; and conſequently in the Knowledge of ourſelves; ſince, without that Knowledge, we cannot enter the *Equilibrium*; and without the *Equilibrium*, we can judge rightly of nothing.

Philo. That will certainly be to us the

* See Dialogue XX.

Key of Evidence, at leaſt of that ſort of Evidence which is neceſſary for finding our way.

Eraſtus. This diſtinction ſeems very proper. There is a ſort of Evidence abſolutely neceſſary for a Traveller, and another barely acceſſory.

The former is what enables us to find the ſtraiteſt and ſhorteſt way to our Journey's end. The latter gives us a diſtinct View of the Objects on both ſides of us, and enables us to give a Deſcription of the Country.

The latter join'd to the former has its Advantages; but the former alone may be ſufficient.

What doth it ſignify, after all, that we have Evidence concerning but few Subjects, if we have enough in regard to the Eſſence of the Road.

This Eſſence is Uprightneſs, an abſolute Conſent given to Truth for reforming us in all reſpects, both in our Inclinations and Ideas.

If this be our Diſpoſition, do we run any great hazard? And if an upright Will of ſubmitting to Truth, on any Terms, doth not attain to its End, what other Means can conduct us to the *True?*

Philo. On that foot, all depends on a thorough Knowledge of one's own Intentions; ſince Uprightneſs is deciſive of the Security of the Road, and without that Knowledge, it is

is possible to mistake the *superficial good Intention*, so frequently mention'd, for an *upright Will.*

Here is abundance of work cut out, *Crito.* The Business is to search the bottom of ourselves, and judge of ourselves, not by superficial Effects, but by the hidden Causes, and most secret Springs.

Crito. I must own that this sort of Evidence wou'd not please me best; an entire Evidence in regard to all Subjects which fall under our Cognizance, particularly in what relates to Metaphysicks, wou'd have more Charms for me. I cou'd have wished that *Eraſtus* had explain'd at large those Truths, which he has only touched on in his *Reveries.*

But I now perceive I am to begin at another End, and learn to discover what passes within myself, before I can discover any thing else.

Eraſtus. The discovery of what passes within one's self, is a proper Key for introducing ourselves into a more extensive Discovery. But the Discovery of all other Subjects, without that, must necessarily be false, and calculated for deceiving.

Need this be proved otherwise, than by what we have said of the *Equilibrium?* How is it possible, without that *Equilibrium*, to attain to a just Discernment? And how shall we be assured we are in the *Equilibrium*, if we mistake ourselves?

Philo. Let us own, dear *Crito*, that we wou'd very fain reach the End without using the Means. It wou'd be much easier for us to expatiate without, in fine Ideas, in all that may be termed *particular Truths*, than to allow simple Truth to unveil us to ourselves, and reform us. We may shake hands upon this.

Erastus. Shall *Erastus* join you?

Philo. He is going to put himself on the level with us.

Erastus. And why not, *Philo?* Is it worth while to rank ourseves in different Classes, for the sake of a few *Reveries* on my side? And do you imagine that I suppose they have carried me to the top of the Hill? I assure you, I consider myself as but very little advanc'd. These *Reveries* are only the result of what I have seen imperfectly at a great distance, and in a very limited point of View.

It is my Opinion, that, without dwelling much on Particulars, we ought to travel in good earnest toward Truth. Thus we shall be better able to make a full Discovery of what we now see but imperfectly.

Crito. There is no going back in this case; we must *walk* instead of *speculating*. At least, we have the satisfaction of travelling in good Company. I make no difficulty of placing myself with you; it wou'd not be proper to let Lady *Modesty* intervene here.

N. B.

N. B. *The two following Letters were written while the foregoing Dialogues were in the Press; and as they were seen in Manuscript by several Persons, it cannot be supposed, that the Conjectures are an After-Thought.*

LETTERS *concerning the* DIALOGUES.

LETTER I.

SIR,

I Imagine the Dialogues will be disapproved of by several, not only Men of the World, but even some who make a Profession of Piety. Persons sincerely pious, and of but little Experience, may apprehend so pleasant a Stile savours too much of the Gaiety of the World: that Conversations, in which Raillery and Irony are so often admitted, are too contrary to that Recollection, which they wou'd never quit. There is never any danger of using too much Caution, or Distrust, of what one knows not thoroughly. But then we should not be too hasty in passing Sentence, on whatever doth not entirely suit our Taste. The most common Appearances often conceal a Fund of Truth; and the most beautiful Appearances may serve to disguise Falsehood. Such as suffer themselves to be

dazzled with or ſtartled at Appearances, can never judge uprightly.

It was by judging of things in this Point of View, that the generality of the *Jews* taxed JESUS CHRIST with being a Glutton and a Wine-bibber, while they look'd on the Scribes and Phariſees as ſo many Saints.

The End, which our Lord propoſed in converſing familiarly with Perſons of an ill Life, ſanctified what appeared irregular to the Eyes of the Phariſees, and became to them an occaſion of Scandal. May not the Deſign of the Author of the Dialogues juſtify, in the ſame manner, what perhaps may prove an Occaſion of Scandal to ſuch as ſtop ſhort at Appearances?

Our Saviour juſtified his View by declaring he was endeavouring to gain Sinners, not Saints. The Author of the Dialogues may juſtify his, by declaring he endeavours to gain Men of the World, to lead them to Truth, and make them reliſh it by offering it to them in an agreeable Dreſs; and, under pretence of amuſing them, bring them to what they moſt fear; I mean, the Knowledge of themſelves. This artful Deſign cannot diſpleaſe good Men, ſuch as ſincerely love Truth, and have nothing ſo much at heart as ſeeing it eſtabliſhed by any poſſible means.

Perhaps the Author ſhould have put an Advertiſement before his Work, for preventing the Scruples of good Men, by declaring his Intentions;

Intentions; but even that would probably have hindred the Effect expected from it. The Fiſh will never be caught, if he knows where the Bait lies.

The Beauties of the Mind, which are converted to ſo ill an Uſe in the World, come originally from God. If Nature, which is made purely for Man, diſplays ſomewhat ſo gay and lovely, in the Spring, ſhall not the Mind of Man, who is the King of Nature, have ſomething in it ſtill more gay and lovely?

It certainly was at firſt endu'd with ſome ſuch thing; and, how deformed ſoever Sin may have rendered it ſince, it is ſtill evident from ſome remaining Traces, that it alone was once in poſſeſſion of more Beauties than all the Beings in the Univerſe.

Men's Fondneſs for the falſe Beauties of the Mind, the Care they take to clothe them with borrow'd Charms, repreſent what they muſt have had originally, and prove that they in vain ſeek to recover them by the Method they take.

The Mind of Man can become truly lovely only in proportion as it becomes good and upright. That Road appearing too long to thoſe who content themſelves with what may give them ſome eaſe, they chuſe a ſhorter way. They take the Shadow for the Body, and furniſh their Minds with borrow'd Beauties, which they ſubſtitute in the room of true ones.

Among

Among theſe Beauties is admitted all that is moſt charming in Pleaſantry and refined Raillery: thus it is eaſy for them to attain to their End; Self-love reaps what it ſowed: the Effect cannot be unlike the Cauſe which produces it. The moſt agreeable Productions of a Mind which deviates from Truth can only ſupport and ſtrengthen that Deviation, both in itſelf and others. It often happens, that thoſe amuſing Productions are moſt agreeable as they are of ſingular ſervice towards making us loſe ſight of ourſelves; as they employ the Imagination on pleaſing Chimæras, they hinder us from feeling our real Evils; not to ſay that ſuch Productions are uſeful for diſguiſing Evil by giving it the Appearance of Good, or at leaſt, by ſhewing it in ſo agreeable a Dreſs, that the Heart has no Inclination to guard againſt it.

Theſe are the ordinary Effects of thoſe fine Compoſitions, where Beauty is diffuſed through the whole; not as an Acceſſory, to accompany the *True*, and ſerve to give it more eaſy entrance, but as the Eſſence of the Work. So that Authors of this ſtamp have hardly any other View than that of pleaſing or acquiring Praiſe. Some of them may indeed aim at ſomewhat more real: and when an Author is happy enough to gain univerſal Applauſe, and acquire the public Approbation, he imagines that may carry him farther.

The Author of the Dialogues certainly does

does not flatter himself with a Success so extensive; so that it is probable his Design was not to please universally. Though his Stile is gay, intermixed with frequent Raillery, and even Banter, this Banter doth not produce the Effect that would please most. Instead of helping the Reader to lose sight of himself, it is constantly employ'd in bringing him back to that tiresome Prospect; it endeavours to ridicule the false Virtues, to which the World offers Incense; and by examining them nearly, it shews the Value that ought to be set on them. This sort of Banter is so far from amusing the Imagination with agreeable Chimæras, that its Tendency is to destroy all that is merely chimerical, in order to make way for Realities, to demolish all Colourings, Compositions and fine Appearances.

This is a kind of Banter, under the Loss of which the World would be very easy; and I doubt whether the most serious Discourses, and most rigid Morality would not be less insupportable than such sort of Pleasantry. A Man must very much mistake his Interest, who offers too faithful Glasses to Persons who are resolved to see themselves handsome. It is to be feared they will be revenged on the Glass for the Deformity it discovers, or rather on him who is indiscreet enough to present the Public with such a Glass.

The Author of the Dialogues would be strangely out of his Account, if he had proposed

posed to please and gain Applause. What then could be his View? Was it to reform Men, by shewing them how ridiculous their false Judgments and false Virtues are? If so, what is the Use of Banter, Raillery, and the ironical Strokes, which are scatter'd through the whole? Perhaps all these have their Use, and concur to that End in a shorter and more expressive manner than the most serious and pathetic Discourse.

The ironical Turn often expresses more in three Words than whole Pages in the literal way. It is perfectly in the right place, when it is employ'd in opposing the *False*, and turning it into Ridicule. The Prophets themselves have not declined the use of it. *Micaiah*, for example, when question'd by King *Ahab*, ridicules both the false Will of the Prince, and that of all his Prophets, when he employs the same Language as they did. *Go up*, says he, *and prosper*. How much was here said in two Words? and how many Words would not have been necessary for expressing them in another manner?

Elijah employs a still more ironical Turn, when he says to the Prophets of *Baal*; *Cry aloud, for he is a God; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a Journey; or peradventure he sleepeth*, &c. There are some false Reasonings, and false Maxims, which are sufficiently shewn to be ridiculous by the bare Repetition or Imitation of them. To undertake

undertake to refute or oppoſe them gravely, would be not only more tedious, but even leſs demonſtrative.

I think, Sir, that, after ſuch Explanations, Men of true Piety will no longer be ſtartled, either at the Gaiety or the bantering ironical Turn, which is diffuſed through the Dialogues in queſtion. If they are otherwiſe diſpoſed, as it may happen, they will at leaſt allow others to make their own advantage of them; and let Men be taken where they can be taken; in order to bring them, if poſſible, to a reliſh of Truth and the Knowledge of themſelves.

LETTER II.

On the DIALOGUES.

SIR,

I Have conſulted the Author on what you tell me, that great Numbers would be ſcandalized at not finding in the Dialogues the Expreſſions uſed in Books of Morality, ſuch as *Repentance*, *Converſion*, *Recollection*, *Prayer*, &c. Take here the Subſtance of his Anſwer.

There is an Infinity of Books written on Religion, where thoſe Terms are employed: Such as cannot diſpenſe with thoſe Terms, may meet with them there: Were the Dialogues penned in the ſame Taſte, they would be

be ranked among those Books, and be read only by such as make profession of Piety; and consequently, would not be a Bait for catching Men of the World; in short, they would not be a new means of making Truth relished.

Though several take the Maxim of St. *Paul* in a very bad Sense; *of becoming all things to all Men, for gaining Souls to God*; without Law *to those who are without Law*, &c. it is susceptible of a very good Meaning. In the bad Sense, it is only a Stroke of worldly Policy, the Art of pleasing the whole World. In the good one, it is an ingenious piece of Skill, inspired by Christian Charity; a Condescension for our Neighbour, whose Prejudices we do not fall on directly, in order to conduct him to Truth another way; in a word, it is knowing how to take Men, where they may be taken.

The Persons, whom the Author had in view in his Dialogues, are not only such as are affrighted at all that savours of Devotion, but also Wits, as they are called; with whom Quotations from Scripture are of but little weight; or who, at least, would dispute eternally on the meaning of Terms. If Men of this sort are to be taken at all, it must be by Principles so simple and inconteſtable, that they cannot be denied or disowned. When we have to do with such Men, we must lay aside Terms, and be satisfied with Ideas of the *True*. It is a great Point gained, if by giving

giving up Terms, we can make them admit of things. This was the Design of our Author.

People of the World and Wits, openly declare they are neither *Devotees* nor *Mystics*; but are not disposed to pass for Persons void of Conscience, Uprightness, and a Love of Truth. In this Point all agree to pay Homage, in their Discourse, to Conscience, Uprightness and Truth. This, say they, is the Essence of Religion. It is granted; they are taken at their own Confession; and by leading them on gradually, they are shewn that this Uprightness, which they profess, is perhaps, not known to them in its Essence; and that, while they extol Virtue in Words, they resist it interiourly.

The Author likewise observed to me, that the Design of this Work was not so much to present Men with a System of Religion, as to let them see how little they are disposed to it, and how incapable they are of distinguishing the *True* from the *False*, for want of Uprightness or an *Equilibrium*; in short, by the *False* of their Will.

The most excellent Treatises on Religion or Piety are to several Persons what a valuable Picture would be, if presented to blind Men, who imagine themselves clear-sighted. It would be to no purpose to place such a Piece before them; the first thing to be done, is to convince them of their Blindness; to make them own their Incapacity of distinguishing Objects,

Objects, and thus work them into a Resolution of permitting themselves to be cured.

This, perhaps, is the Reason why so many religious Books produce but little effect. They do not sufficiently send Men into themselves, or refer them to the Discovery of the secret Springs, which determine their Judgments.

Here every thing has a tendency to work on Man, to unveil his most secret Motives and Intentions, his Opposition to the Impressions of the *True*; in a word, to put him into such a Disposition of Uprightness and Equity, as opens all the doors to Truth within himself.

In order to judge of the Usefulness of a Work and the Design of the Author, we ought to consider, not so much what the Work distinctly expresses, as what it leads to, and the Path it opens. Those who have a relish for Truth, independent of certain Terms, to which Men imagine it confined, will soon find the drift of the Dialogues; and that, without distinctly expressing several particular Truths, they give a Key to them, which may be called universal. Of this sort are the Distinctions between *simple* Truth, which is only *one*; and *distinct* Truths, which are *many*; and that between the *indirect* Testimony which the Scripture gives to Truth, and the *direct* Testimony of Truth itself in the Conscience.

Such

Such as read them with a ſimple and upright Diſpoſition, may know in general by the Effects, by the impreſſion they will leave behind them, what is the Spirit of the Work. If thoſe Impreſſions end in diſplaying to their view the ſecret Springs of their Interiour; in ſhewing them the Illuſions and falſe Appearances, which they have taken for Realities; the falſe Opinions and Prejudices, to which they had given the Name of Truth; if they learn to judge of themſelves, not by ambiguous Effects generally approved, but by the hidden Principle or Cauſe which produces them; if, I ſay, the Impreſſions made by this Reading have a Tendency towards producing ſuch Effects, thoſe who experience them, may thereby diſcover by what Spirit the Author was guided, and whither that Spirit may conduct ſuch as eſpouſe his Maxims.

They will be able to ſee whether the Pleaſantry, intermixed in the Dialogues, leads them to mere *Nothings*, to things even worſe than Nothing; to a Forgetfulneſs and Miſtake of themſelves; the common Effect of the falſe Pleaſantry, that reigns in the World. We have an Inſtance of this in the fifteenth Dialogue; the Beginning of which affords a Scene that, by the different Parts there acted, might paſs for a Comedy. The Sequel of the Dialogue ſhews that this ſort of Comedy has its Uſe; and that by ſetting the modiſh

falſe

false Judgments and Opinions in a ridiculous Light, it may lead us to a thorough Examination of the most serious and important Subjects.

The following Dialogues afford other Scenes, of which understanding Persons will easily perceive the drift. There are whole Pages in the ironical Strain, where the Discourse seems very grave. If it be ask'd, to what purpose is all this? It is, because the three Friends, who are too well agreed on the Substance of things, to speak seriously a contrary Language, are obliged to seem to maintain the vulgar Opinions, that they may have more room to shew the *False* of them. The ironical Strain is perfectly well suited to this Design.

The Reader will not, perhaps, understand the Drift of those sorts of Catechisms, where one acts the Professor, the other the Scholar. These are introduced, for uniting, by short Questions and Answers, those Truths which had been scatter'd through the foregoing Dialogues. Such Examinations, in quality of Friends, would have been ridiculous; it was necessary in this Case, that they should assume the Titles of Professor and Scholar. Besides, this is suitable to the Character of *Erastus*, who never plays the Doctor seriously, and laughs at himself, as soon as he catches himself at treating of any profound Subject.

It

It may be ſaid, that he handles the moſt abſtracted in the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth Dialogues. True; but then he is led to them inſenſibly by the Objections of his Friends, and delivers his Thoughts only in quality of a *Reveur*. He ſometimes even laughs at himſelf when he is obliged to philoſophize, in order to go back to the Principles of things. He pretends no more to the Title of Philoſopher, than to that of Doctor. How could either of them belong to a Man, whom ſeveral ſuppoſe, and perhaps not without great reaſon, not ſo much as a Smatterer in Grammar? All he knows, ſay they, he has learnt only in his *Reveries*.

Theſe ſame *Reveries*, having led him to philoſophize, in the Dialogues laſt ſpecified, bring him back to Man, and to a cloſe View of him in the fineſt Springs, and deepeſt Roots of his Actions and Intentions.

This is the Buſineſs of the five or ſix laſt Dialogues, in which, perhaps, ſeveral will find on all hands Glaſſes repreſenting them too much to the Life. If this ſhould prove to be their Caſe, they may have recourſe to the * *colour'd Glaſſes*, which by eaſing them of that troubleſome Proſpect, will let them ſee themſelves in another Light.

* *An Alluſion to the Fable in the ſeventeenth Dialogue.*

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THE

SYSTEMS

OF THE

ANTIENTS and MODERNS,

RECONCILED;

By an Expoſition of the different SENTIMENTS of ſome DIVINES, concerning the STATE of SOULS, when ſeparated from their Bodies.

IN

FOURTEEN LETTERS.

With NOTES, and ſome Additional Pieces relating to the ſame Subject.

PREFACE.

THESE *Letters, which have been thought worthy of the Attention of ſome judicious Perſons, will, without doubt, meet with Oppoſition from ſuch as are prejudiced againſt all Appearance of Novelty. Perhaps, even Men of Piety, on the bare View of the Title-Page, will declare the Subject of them to be* curious Queſtions, *which it is not allowable to examine or inquire deeply into. They would be eaſily undeceived, would they be at the pains of peruſing them, with a Frame of Mind entirely free from Partiality. Queſtions of mere* Curioſity *have no real Tendency; they are of no Uſe, either for* Speculation *or* Practice. *Inſtead of clearing up the Difficulties or apparent Contradictions in Religion, they produce new ones.*

It may here be ſaid, that the Truth deliver'd in theſe Letters, are uſeful in both Theory *and* Practice, *were it not more proper to leave that to the Reader's own Judgment. He will eaſily find that, in regard to* Theory, *the Tendency of the whole is to ſhew the Harmony of the Divine Perfections in the Work of Man's Salvation; and that in regard to* Practice, *the whole*

is calculated for proving the abſolute Neceſſity of real and interiour Sanctity; as the Opinion of an exteriour Imputation, which lulls ſo many into a falſe Security, is here refuted.

*Thoſe, who have hitherto been at a loſs for any ſolid Satisfaction, concerning the Difference of Opinions between the antient and modern Divines *, will certainly be pleaſed to find in theſe Letters ſome Explanation of ſo many Difficulties. If they do, the Truths contained in them, will ſtand in need of no other Apology.*

* Concerning *Predeſtination* and *Univerſal Grace.*

THE

THE
INTRODUCTION.
BEING
A DISSERTATION *concerning the Nature of the* DIVINE GOODNESS *and* JUSTICE, *considered in their Origin.*

MANKIND are agreed, that the Ideas of *Goodneſs* and *Juſtice* are inſeparably connected with the Idea of GOD; but our Cuſtom of ſetting thoſe Attributes in oppoſition to each other, is a proof that we are Strangers to their nature.

We uſually ſay, That *Juſtice* gives way to *Goodneſs*, or *Goodneſs* gives place to *Juſtice*; but the Knowledge of the *Unity* of GOD will make this falſe Notion fall to the ground; and ſatisfy us, that the Diſtinctions we make between the Divine Attributes proceed from the narrow Limits of our Underſtanding, which is obliged to conſider the different Parts of a *Whole* ſucceſſively, not being able to fix them to a Point without being dazled with them.

We find it eaſy to conceive *Goodneſs* diſtinguiſhed from *Juſtice*; and hence imagine, that they are ſo far from being one and the ſame, that there is even a conſiderable Diffe-

rence betwixt them. If we ſurvey them in another light, and trace them up to their Origin, we ſhall, perhaps, find that *Goodneſs* is as it were the Center of *Juſtice*; the latter loſing itſelf in the former: In a word, that the Idea of *Goodneſs* preſents to the Mind ſomething more fixed and poſitive than the Idea of *Juſtice*, ſeparately conſider'd.

Let us then repreſent to ourſelves the Infinite Being in the Eternity, prior to the Exiſtence of Time, before any Creature came out of his hands. Let us repreſent to ourſelves, I ſay, the ſelf-ſufficient Being, deſigning to form intelligent Beings; let us ſuppoſe ourſelves acquainted with this Purpoſe before it was put in execution: what can we preſume concerning the State of thoſe new Beings, that are to come from the hands of a perfectly happy Being, but that they will be render'd as happy, as their finite Capacities can admit of?

The Idea of *Happineſs* is the only one that offers itſelf eſſentially in this Caſe; indeed that of *Perfection* is here alſo included: but this Idea of *Perfection* has ſomething equivocal in it, whereas that of *Happineſs* has nothing like it. Man aſpires preciſely and abſolutely after *Happineſs*; but after *Perfection*, only as it leads to, or makes a part of that *Happineſs*.

What then muſt be the Origin of the *Happineſs* of created Beings? It will eſſentially be the *Happineſs* which God enjoys. The perfectly

perfectly happy Being, wanting nothing for himself, cannot create Beings with a View of making an addition to his own Felicity. In forming them after his own Image, he can have no other design than that of making them happy, as he himself is; I mean, suitably to the Proportion between *Finite* and *Infinite*.

Hence it follows, that the Idea of infinite Goodness is inseparable from that of an infinitely happy Being; and that whatever proceeds from such a Being, must necessarily partake of his *Happiness*. The pure and perfect *Good*, cannot do or confer any thing but what is good; and did it communicate any thing else, it would be inconsistent with itself.

This undoubtedly is the principal Idea, that offers itself to the Mind concerning the Deity, and the End he may have in view in bringing Creatures into Being; which Idea is not equivocal, but positive and unchangeable: but the same cannot be said of the Idea of *Justice*; it having nothing in it of a positive nature: so that should we suppose Creatures do not yet exist, 'tis plain we can have no distinct Idea of it.

'Tis the Existence of Creatures then, which affords the distinct Idea of *Justice*. From the first moment of their Existence, till they become culpable, the Notion of Rigour or Severity never enters into the Idea of *Justice*; God is acknowledged to be *Just* and *Equitable*, though he should never give Proofs of his Severity.

'Tis true indeed, we have not a very distinct Idea of the manner how *Justice* might have been exercised on, or manifested to, innocent Creatures. But, let us substitute the Term *Equity* instead of *Justice*, and we shall see that God might have shewn himself *equitable* towards the Innocent, by the Equality or Proportion which he might establish among them, according to the use they should make of their Liberty. I don't pretend fully to resolve this Difficulty; but it is certain, that *Equity* has always existed in God; whereas Rigour is merely accidental, and would never have been, had not Creatures deviated from their primitive Integrity.

Equity therefore constituting, without dispute, the very Essence of Justice; I'd ask, whether infinite Goodness and perfect Equity don't harmoniously agree? And whether they can be set in opposition, according to the generally received Opinion?

But here, perhaps, it may be objected, "That the Nature of Goodness is always to "communicate something of it's self; and "yet Equity often requires that Men should "be punished severely. In which Case, "*Goodness* must needs suspend its Effects, "and give way to those of *Justice*."

I have already said, that this way of conceiving things proceeds from the Narrowness of our Understanding: but in order to evince this, let us only call to mind the grand Principles wherein we are all agreed; that

that GOD is as essentially *Good* or *Beneficent*, as he is essentially *Happy*.

From hence it follows, that boundless Goodness can never cease to will and actually do good to every Creature, as far as it is capable of receiving it. Besides (if we have a just Notion of the matter) it will likewise follow, that *Equity* or *Justice* are nothing but Agents of the very same Goodness, which in the end concur to render Mankind happy.

This Idea may appear singular, till it is illustrated by the following Reflections. Is it not agreed, that the Deity is uniform in his *Design*; and that this Design must be invariable, to be worthy of its Author? If therefore the Deity has but one Design with respect to Mankind, namely, to render them happy; why may not he make the different, nay the seemingly incompatible Means, which he shall employ, concur to the same End? And may we not justly say, that it is infinite Goodness, which acts, orders, and disposes of all these Events, to bring Mankind at last to their allotted Happiness.

Hence it follows, that the Effects of Sovereign Goodness are never suspended, but that we even share of them, when under what we term Correction or Punishment. Nor is this entirely incomprehensible; we see some Resemblance of it in the Chastisements that Paternal Affection inflicts. The Application is here superfluous.

This Idea of unlimited Goodneſs, founded upon the Felicity of an abſolutely happy Being, is eaſily conceived; Men, as bad as they are, find within themſelves ſome Traces, tho' partly defaced, that bear witneſs to this Truth. A Man, who has not quite extinguiſhed common Humanity, or baniſhed it from his Breaſt, were he able to produce a Set of Creatures from nothing; ſuch a Man, I ſay, when he conſults himſelf, muſt always feel a Diſpoſition to employ the whole compaſs of his Power to render them happy; and did he himſelf enjoy ſome Bliſs, he'd take a pleaſure in making them partakers of it. I'd fain aſk any Perſon capable of Thought and Reflection, if this is not his own way of Thinking; and, ſuppoſing he had the power of producing Creatures, without being able to make them happy, whether he would not chuſe to drop this Deſign, and forbear to exerciſe this ſuppoſed Power.

Thus the Deity, by the ſmall Portion of Benevolence we feel in ourſelves, invites us to judge how far his own immenſe Goodneſs may reach *. What a number of Conſequences might be hence deduced!

But here perhaps the following Objection may be ſtarted. "The Idea, which you "have given us of Infinite Goodneſs, as a "Conſequence of God's Felicity, ſeems fixed "and unalterable, when conſider'd in its Ori-"gin; good Senſe eſpouſes it, without the "leaſt

* St. *Matthew*, ch. vii. 11.

" leaſt difficulty: but when we deſcend to a " detail of the Events, that the Deity has ei- " ther ordained or permitted; when we look " into what he has revealed to Men concern- " ing their Future State, this firſt Idea of im- " menſe Goodneſs diſappears; and nothing re- " mains but an Idea of *Juſtice*, or rather *Se- " verity* employ'd in puniſhing Mankind: " and if there are any traces of the ſupreme " Goodneſs yet remaining, it is that of a par- " tial Goodneſs, confined to an inconſidera- " ble number of Subjects, and limited, for the " greateſt part of Mankind, to the ſhort ſpace " of this Life, after which there is no room " left for Hope.

" This difficulty would gain additional " Strength by an enumeration of a great ma- " ny Events ſince the Creation of Man. Not " to inſiſt on this Queſtion, *viz.* Why did " not God prevent the Fall of the firſt Man? " a much more perplexing Objection offers " it ſelf, *viz.* That God has permitted all " Men from the beginning to the end of the " World ſhould ſpring from that miſerable " Stock: that theſe Perſons, who are innocent " of the Tranſgreſſion of their firſt Parents, " are at their very birth placed in a State of " Miſery: that they are wretched before they " are guilty; and that to inhance their Miſe- " ry, they are not able to avoid it, by reaſon " of a chain of corrupt Inclinations which " appear in them: for where is the Man who " does not more or leſs feel their fatal Effects?

" This State of Misery would still be tole-
" rable, were it confined to the short Period
" of this Life; but to compleat the Misery, to
" which nothing is comparable, all Men, as
" soon as they come into the World, are not
" only laid under a necessity of suffering and
" dying at last, but are also exposed to the
" terrible risque of eternal Damnation; which
" of itself is such a frightful Scene of Misery,
" that we find no Appearance of Infinite Good-
" ness here *; even Equity and Justice va-
" nish; and Man seems to have reason to
" upbraid the Creator for giving him Ex-
" istence †.

" What now (continues the Objector) will
" become of the grand Principles which you
" have laid down and traced up to their very
" Source? those unchangeable Principles of
" immense Goodness, which we imagined to
" be indisputable, and of whose Effects all
" created Beings are for ever to share."

This Difficulty is so strong, that it destroys itself; it proves infinitely too much ‡; it would

* The Objector is supposed to build his Argument, upon the old System of the Eternity of Hell-Torments.

† To be necessarily created miserable, and to run the risque of being so for ever, is a Thought that no-body can give into; for all the Ideas of Equity we are Masters of, fly in the face of it.

‡ A Difficulty advanced against so clear a Principle, as that of the Divine Goodness, falls to the ground of its own accord; and the stronger it appears to be, we may be assured it is built upon a false Principle. Now this Difficulty depends on the Eternity of Hell-Torments;

would overthrow all Religion, whereof the Idea of God, ought to be the Basis: it would give the lye to the Voice of universal Nature, of Conscience and common Sense itself; all which unanimously conspire to bear witness to the infinite Goodness. This same Voice of common Sense does likewise teach us, that the Ideas we have of perfect Goodness, are not in the least our Works, but must have a superiour *Cause* and *Origin*; and since Man is not this *Cause* and *Origin*, they must proceed from the Author of his Being. In consequence of which, I ask, whether it be reasonable to suspect those Traces imprinted in us by his hand in indelible Characters, or smother undoubted Evidence, to make room for Difficulties, built upon Principles that are, at least, equivocal, if not perhaps without any Foundation.

" But here it may be again asked, How will " you vindicate the Divine Goodness in a great " many instances, that are not equivocal, and " whose dismal Effects we ourselves actually " feel ?"

Not to enter upon a detail of numberless things, whose Springs I am unacquainted with, I'll go higher and build on a *sure Foundation*; I judge of Uncertainties by what is certain; and that in proportion to my knowledge of it. Of which, take the following example:

I look upon the Idea of Infinite Goodness, as here

ments; put the Case that this Supposition is groundless, then the Difficulty is removed, as will be shewn presently.

here deſcribed, to be a certain Principle, and make it the Baſis of the Judgments I form on equivocal Effects, whoſe End I cannot explain.

The ſtate wherein the firſt Man was placed, has nothing in it, but what perfectly correſponds with this Principle of Sovereign Goodneſs; but the miſerable State into which he ſoon fell, not being prevented by the Interpoſition of the ſame Goodneſs, this dire Event (I ſay) is ſhocking.

I place this Event among the Effects, whoſe Cauſes are hid from me; I know not how far God ought to go in putting the Liberty, he had beſtowed on Man, to the trial. Here I meet with Uncertainty and Obſcurity in ſeveral reſpects; and therefore go back to what is *certain*, and what Uncertainty cannot ſhake. Hence I conclude, that one day Men will know that infinite Goodneſs never was inconſiſtent with itſelf, not even in this Event, which at preſent they alledge makes againſt it.

However, if we view the matter in another light, it is eaſy to conceive how *Adam* being placed in a *happy* Situation, and freely wandering out of the way, could not but fall into *Evil*; it is juſt, that Man's Condition ſhould have a Tincture of the choice he has made; and what we call Juſtice, if rightly underſtood, is nothing but a natural and unavoidable Effect of the good or bad Diſpoſition, which he has more or leſs freely contracted. Goodneſs, always agreeing with Juſtice, does not oppoſe the natural courſe, which ſuch and ſuch Effects

fects ought to have; and should it act thus, it must invert the Order of things, which possibly might prove to the disadvantage of Mankind: but what Goodness never fails in, is the setting all Engines to work for repairing the damage Man has done himself; this end it never loses out of sight; and makes even those dismal Effects, whose destructive cause we lament, concur in the same design.

'Tis true indeed, that nothing seems more opposite to Immense Goodness, than the wretched Condition in which all the Posterity of *Adam* are born. Here again God has not thought proper to invert the Order of Nature. He might, says one, have deprived *Adam* of Life, and created a second Man to be the Father of a happy Posterity. But do we know whether it would have been consistent with the Divine Wisdom and Goodness to have proceeded in that manner? Are we acquainted with all the means, which the Deity has in his hands, for sooner or later more than infinitely compensating the miserable State, into which Mankind are necessarily born?

Here again we may judge of Uncertainty by what is certain. The *Uncertainty* is the condition of Mankind in the Life to come; the *Certainty*, on one hand, is their Condition in this Life, and, on the other, the Purpose of God to render them all happy. It is certain, the Design of God must be accomplished sooner or later; and since 'tis evident, that it is not accomplished in this Life, consequently, it is

reſerved for the Life to come. That Time which appears to us uncertain (and which is ſo to us in ſome degree, with reſpect to Circumſtances) ceaſes ſo to be in its *Iſſue*.

Another Remark that preſents it ſelf here, is, that Man, being at his birth placed in a State of Miſery, before he could deſerve it, Goodneſs, nay Equity it ſelf, require that the State of Happineſs for which he was created, ſhould infallibly wait for him at the end; that his laſt Condition ſhould neceſſarily be happy, as his firſt was miſerable for a time, before his Liberty could be the cauſe of it. We may even preſume, that boundleſs Goodneſs will make this tranſient State of Miſery an Enhancement of Hapineſs; ſo that Men, having experienced Pain, will be thereby ſuſceptible of a greater degree of Bliſs, than they could have been, had they not paſſed thro' ſuch a State.

Without this Reſtoration, the Recompence would be imperfect, and not anſwerable to the Idea of Goodneſs, as we have juſt now eſtabliſhed it. Men might complain, that they have neceſſarily ſuffered Ills, from which God could have ſecured them; or that they have not availed to render them happier at laſt. Here, the Danger of being eternally miſerable vaniſhes; it is not even conceivable how ſuch a Thought has been able to enter into the Mind of Man*: This Danger, however, is the Soul of

* Let us ſuppoſe a Man, who has ſome Idea of Infinite Goodneſs, but has never heard talk of a miſerable Eternity; how do we imagine, ſuch a Man would reliſh

of the greateſt Difficulties that can be raiſed againſt the Idea of the Infinite Goodneſs. This Danger not being admitted, the latter State of Man is aſcertained; and as he was originally created for Happineſs, ſo that Happineſs does infallibly wait him. The Deſign of God apparently ſuſpended for a time by the Calamities of human Life, prevails, and is fully accompliſhed.

It will be granted, that this Plan is worthy of God, and its End above all fully ſatisfactory.

But ſtill it may be objected, "That in order to arrive at this happy End, there is a "terrible Interval; the unavoidable Miſeries of the preſent Life are light, and will "ſoon have an end; but the additional Proſpect of future Sufferings, the end of which "we know not, is terrible. Would it not be "more worthy of immenſe Goodneſs to exempt Men from all manner of Puniſhment "after this Life, ſince they were formed and "infallibly deſtined for Bliſs? Why does not "that

reliſh the firſt Propoſal of it? What Horror would not ſuch an Image give him? He would conclude, that thoſe who admit of ſuch a State, have a God different from his: that they never were acquainted with the immenſe Goodneſs of the ſupremely happy Being. He would even conjecture, that thoſe who eſpouſe this Opinion, feel not within themſelves thoſe Characters of Beneficence which are inſeparable from human Nature.

In reality, this ſtrange Opinion degrades the Divine Goodneſs, and places it below Human Goodneſs. It even ſuppoſes, that God could not foreſee what would befall the Work of his own Hands; that he ventured to give Being to an infinite Number of Creatures, without any Certainty of being able to make them happy.

" that now actually happen, which one day
" will certainly be brought about * ?"

This question amounts to the same as that concerning the Fall of the first Man; Why did not God prevent his making that use of his Liberty? or rather, why did he create him a free Agent? For a confined Liberty is no Liberty. Such Difficulties as these take their rise from our Ignorance and our short-sighted Views of things. A Being without Liberty would no longer be Man; and then we might ask, why God thought fit to make Men.

But not to dwell any longer upon uncertain Speculations, let us return to a certain Principle. It is certain, that infinite Goodness cannot make a present of any thing to Man but what is for his good. Since therefore it has endowed him with Liberty, and this Gift might, by accident, prove prejudicial to him; it follows necessarily, that it is in itself so essential to his Nature, that Divine Wisdom could not divest him of it, without divesting him of the Quality of Man; we likewise clearly see, that the Good accruing to him from it must infinitely surpass the Damage he may possibly sustain from it; without which we may presume, that Divine Wisdom and Goodness would never have made him a present of so pernicious a nature. I

* How shall we reconcile Men's Ideas of the Goodness of God? According to some, 'twould be agreeable to Infinite Goodness to exempt Men from all manner of Pain after this life; according to others, eternal Torments are no ways inconsistent with the very same Goodness.

I pass by all that may be said of the Advantages of Liberty. But it must be acknowledged, that how great soever they are supposed to be, if this same Liberty put Man in danger of eternal Damnation, he might justly complain of it as a fatal Gift. It is in vain to say, that without this Liberty, Man would be incapable of Happiness; for he would certainly prefer Insensibility, and even Annihilation, to a wretched Eternity, or the bare Dangers of it. This, by the by, may shew us how full this Opinion is of insurmountable Difficulties.

I come now to the other part of the Objection. "Does this gloomy Interval, which we "see betwixt us and the reserved Bliss, agree "with the Idea of Sovereign Goodness*?"

I answer, That this Interval is by no means the Work of God, he has not fixed the Term of it, but has left that in our own power; it depends purely on ourselves to hasten on that happy Time, that State of Felicity which is already purchased for us; there is nothing wanting, but for us to acquire a Capacity of enjoying

* We have already observed, that God does not invert natural Order; this would be a denial of the Wisdom which reigns in all his Works. In order to make Men actually happy, notwithstanding their inward Disorder, *Good* and *Evil* must change their Nature; so that *Good* would not naturally make us happy, nor *Evil* naturally render us miserable. Infinite Goodness cannot set itself in opposition to this Order, without which every thing would be put in confusion. All it can do for Man, is not to abandon him in the Misery, wherein he has involved himself, and afford him the means of recovering from it.

enjoying it, and for this end to make use both of our Liberty, and all other Means that are put in our hands*. Every thing on God's part contributes to our Assistance; he makes even the Miseries of Life, which are Consequences of the Fall of the first Man, concur to the same end†.

Here Man himself is the Disposer of his own Lot; not indeed for Eternity, but at least for a Season; that is, it is in his power to aggravate and prolong his Pain, or on the contrary to shorten it‖. The use of his Liberty determines

* The Liberty of Man requires, that God should make use of means to reduce him to order. Every sudden Change would annihilate the Exercise of his Liberty; should God operate directly on Man's Will, all use of Means would be superfluous. If such Changes were suited to his Nature, and were better for him than the use of indirect Means, God would be wanting in Goodness to deny him them; and Men might complain, that they have a long and painful Journey to take, which God could have freed them from, by transforming them on a sudden.

† The Miseries of Life that some undergo, being excessive, are a strong Demonstration of the Necessity of indirect Means. Would the Divine Goodness allow Men to suffer so many Calamities, if it could exempt him from them, and if those very Means did not indirectly concur to restore him to Happiness? Doth not the unequal Distribution of Happiness and Misery in this Life, give us a glimpse of what must pass hereafter, of what they are to expect after this Life, who have made it their chief Business to enjoy the Pleasures of this World?

‖ The present Life is the Season in which, by the good or bad Use of Time, we may shorten or prolong the Miseries of a future State. For we shall reap in the other World, what we have sown in this.

determines it, and no Fate neceſſarily makes this Liberty hurtful to him; he is too well ſatisfied, that he is the Maſter of it; and when he would complain of this Gift of Heaven, he feels himſelf ſelf-condemned.

Man, 'tis true, takes a pleaſure in diſputing with God, and demanding a Reaſon for his Conduct; God condeſcends to juſtify his Meaſures towards Man; he declares his Intention, and aſks him, *Are not my Ways equal?* Ez. xviii. 25. But Man frequently refuſes to acquieſce and acknowledge the Juſtice of his Proceedings. In the Life to come, he ſhall yield the Cauſe to his Judge, *Rom.* iii. 4. and no more accuſe God of being Author of his Miſery, but lay the blame at his own door.

In ſhort, when by the Deſtruction of *Evil*, which has rendered him miſerable, he ſhall become capable of the Happineſs for which he was created, then he will know this Immenſe Goodneſs he ſo long miſtook. He will acknowledge it the only Cauſe both of his *Being*, and of the *Felicity* he enjoys. *Juſtice* itſelf will be diſplay'd before his Eyes as the *Agent* of *Goodneſs*, concurring with it in the Deſtruction of *Evil*; he will be convinced, that none of his Sufferings were uſeleſs, and that the pains he has endured were either the unavoidable Conſequence of the Abuſe of his Liberty, or neceſſary Means that Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs have employed for reducing him to Order.

Then that Eternity, which ſhall ſucceed Time,

Time, will be essentially agreeable to the Eternity which preceded it; nor will there be any other difference, than the Existence of an infinite number of Beings that did not exist in the former; but all those Beings will be the Images of the sovereignly happy Being. They will all partake of his Bliss in the degree and measure proportioned to their several Capacities; they will rejoice at having received a Being, and perhaps even at their having experienced what Pain is. They will admire *perfect Equity* in the infinite Proportions it has established among intelligent Creatures; and the entire Compensation of the *Good* and *Bad* things of this Life, with those of the Life to come. The Idea of *Severity* will no longer enter into that of *Justice*, and *Wisdom* having answered the designs of sovereign Goodness in restoring all things to Order, God will review the *Workmanship of his Hands*, as he did in the Beginning, and pronounce it *very Good.*

LETTER I.

In which a Principle is laid down for understanding the Scripture, which is applicable to the Question in hand.

SIR,

YOU seem'd surprized the other day, when I happened to say in Conversation, that the Doctrine of the Eternity of Hell-Torments was not so inconteſtable, as not to be

be called in queſtion by a great number of judicious Men. To this you oppoſed the repeated Expreſſions in Scripture of *eternal Fire*, of the *Worm that never dieth*, &c. I had not then time to anſwer your Objections; I now enter on that Taſk.

Firſt then, I am to obſerve to you, that the Perſons who are of this Opinion, moſt of whom are *Engliſh* Divines, maintain that, both in the *Greek* and *Hebrew*, the terms *Eternal*, *Eternity*, and *Never*, are very equivocal, moſt commonly ſignifying a long Period of Time, and ſometimes an indefinite Time.

It is ſaid, that the Slave ſhould continue in his Maſter's Houſe *for ever*. God promiſes to give the *Iſraelites* the Land of *Canaan for evermore*; and *Jeremy* ſpeaks of the Temple and Sacrifices as of things that *never* were to be aboliſhed, *Chap.* xxxiii. 18. Laſtly, God ſwore to *David*, that a Succeſſor upon his Throne ſhould *never* fail. In all which Caſes, 'tis evident, the words *Eternal*, *Never*, and *Always*, &c. cannot be underſtood in a ſtrict, literal Senſe.

Let us firſt agree upon an inconteſtable Principle for underſtanding the Scriptures. It contains Truths which we may call *Eternal* and *Unchangeable*, which are the Foundation of all the reſt, independent of Expreſſions, Figures, Parables, *&c.* Of this ſort are the *Spirituality*, *Eternity*, *Omnipotence* of God, and whatever elſe we can know of his Perfections. I call them *Unchangeable*, becauſe they

they are imprinted on our very Nature in such a manner, that, though the Scriptures were lost, we should not be less certain of their Truth than we are at present.

Next to these, which serve as a Foundation to all the rest, we find likewise in Scripture, God's Design of saving and sanctifying Men through his Son.

These Truths, which are the Basis and Essence of all Religion, being once laid down, you will allow, Sir, that if the Scripture abounds with a prodigious number of figurative, allegorical, equivocal, and even contradictory Expressions; that we must judge of their true Sense, not by what the words seem to import, but by those unshaken Truths that can never vary.

Thus, what I know with certainty concerning the *Spirituality* of God, hinders me from taking literally what is said in several places, of his *Eyes*, *Hands*, *Nostrils*, &c. In like manner, what I know concerning his *Sanctity*, prevents my understanding in a literal Sense those Expressions which seem to ascribe to him the Passions of *Wrath*, *Jealousy*, *Fury*, and *Partiality*. This Rule is applicable to a thousand places of Scripture; and would clear up abundance of Difficulties, when rightly applied.

But to return to the Opinion in question, against which you produce the Expressions of *everlasting Fire*, of *the Worm that never dieth*, &c. I answer, (according to the Rule

I juſt now laid down) that when the Scripture ſeems to contradict itſelf it ſome places, we muſt not take any thing in a literal Senſe, but what perfectly agrees with undoubted and fundamental Truths.

The firſt of theſe Truths, as I juſt now ſaid, are all that we know of the Divine Perfections, whether by written Revelation, or by internal Teſtimony ſtamped on the Conſciences of all Men.

The Truths of the ſecond Rank, are ſuch as we know only by Scripture-Teſtimony, and yet are perfectly connected with the former. Of this ſort is the Declaration of GOD's Purpoſe of giving his Son for Mankind; a Purpoſe which places the *Sanctity*, *Juſtice*, *Wiſdom* and *Mercy* of GOD, in the ſtrongeſt Light.

Of the ſame kind is that Truth, atteſted and ſo poſitively repeated through the whole Scripture; that none can be admitted into perfect Bliſs, unleſs he is cleanſed *from all filthineſs of the Fleſh and Spirit*.

You underſtand by this time, Sir, the drift of what I have advanced. I now aſk you, upon what bottom, the Proofs alledged to ſupport the Eternity of Hell-Torments, are founded? Why, purely upon three or four Expreſſions of *Eternity*, *the Worm that never dieth*, &c. which, as I have already obſerved, may be taken in different Senſes.

But what are the Supports of the contrary Opinion? Thoſe very *unchangeable Truths*,

which are the *Basis* of all Religion; and this I shall endeavour to illustrate.

GOD is *Wise*, *Just* and *Good*; no one of his Attributes destroys another; *Justice* is not opposite to *Goodness*, nor *Goodness* to *Justice*. I go one step farther, and say they are so inseparable, that we cannot so much as imagine, or suppose a Man to be *Just* unless he is *Good*, or *Good* unless he is *Just*.

In GOD, *Goodness* and *Justice* are boundless; by his *Goodness*, he offers his Creatures all the Treasures of his Bliss; by his *Justice* he fills with the same Treasures those who accept of them, and leaves those who refuse them, destitute of them: this is signified to us by these Words; *All that are far from thee, shall perish*, Psal. lxxiii. And again, *Wo unto their Soul, for they have rewarded evil unto themselves*, Isa. iii. 9.

Divine Justice then is widely different from the Idea commonly formed of it: It is represented under the Notion of *Hatred*, *Vengeance*, *Wrath* and *Fury*, and therefore Goodness and Mercy are set in opposition to it, to prevent, as it were, the Effects of its rigid Severity. In reality, were *Justice* of such a nature, GOD must cease to be *Just*, whenever he exercises his *Goodness*; or *Good* and *Merciful*, when he employs his *Justice*; since it is evident that *Goodness* and *Wrath*, *Mercy* and *Revenge*, can never subsist together.

But, to form a right Idea of the Nature of *Divine Justice*, we ought to conceive that it has

has nothing in it of threatning or severity; it is represented to us under the figure of a perfectly equal Ballance, which inclines to one side only by the force of the weight put into one Scale. The Torments it seems to inflict upon Sinners, do not proceed from *Justice*, but from *themselves*, *who lay up Treasures of Wrath*, Rom. ii. They alone feed the *Worm*, that must gnaw them, and pile up combustible Materials for the *Fire* that must burn them; as is well expressed in the Words of the Prophets; *Isaiah* l. 11. *Walk in the Light of your Fire, and in the Sparks you have kindled*; and elsewhere, *They have lighted the Fire in my Anger, wherefore he shall be burnt in my Rage.* I might cite thousands of Passages to prove this Truth, which of itself is well enough understood by the Conscience.

What are we to conclude from what I have advanced concerning the Nature of Justice? If this Justice is not really attended, either with Hatred, Fury or Revenge *, but is inseparable from Infinite Goodness; can we conceive it will condemn Millions of Creatures, formed after God's Image, to dreadful and never-ending Misery; and even doom them to the Hatred of God, to Rage, to Despair, and Blasphemy for all Eternity?

* Justice is of so different a Nature from Revenge, that a Judge who should condemn a Malefactor to Punishment, on a Principle of Revenge, would be look'd upon as a Monster.

Might we not rather, on the contrary, say that the chief Business of this sovereign *Justice*, is to make *just* whatever is *unjust*, and render the *crooked straight?* What is more unjust and contrary to the Views of the Creator, than that Myriads of his Creatures should for ever hate him? I ask once more, can sovereign Justice will Injustice, or permit it to subsist to all Eternity?

What I have hitherto said, ought to be consider'd only as imperfect Proofs, or as a sort of Probabilities founded on bare good Sense and the Testimony of Conscience; or, to speak more properly, on the Ideas of Justice, which all of us find engraved in our Minds, and must necessarily be the Work of the Creator. From this Source we draw the Ideas of those Truths, which I call *eternal*, and *immutable*; *viz.* of GOD's Wisdom, Justice and Goodness; and to those he himself remits us, to determine betwixt him and us, concerning the Equity of his Conduct towards us, *Isaiah* v. *Judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my Vine*; and again, *Ezek.* xviii. 29. *O house of* Israel! *Are not my Ways equal?* These Words suppose that the Rule, to which GOD sends all of us to measure whether his Ways are right, is right itself, being the Workmanship of his own Hand.

I should now proceed to some more positive Proofs of Holy Writ for the support of this Opinion; but as the Subject is too extensive to be crouded into a single Letter,

you'll

you'll permit me to defer the discussion of it, 'till my next.

LETTER II.

Wherein the Proofs taken from Scripture, concerning the Design of the Incarnation and Death of JESUS CHRIST, *are proposed.*

SIR,

TO satisfy your Demands, I shall here endeavour to lay down the Proofs, alledged for the support of the Opinion in question.

One of the chief of them, is drawn from the Incarnation of JESUS CHRIST, and the Design of his Coming.

A second, from the many positive Declarations wherewith the Scriptures abound, *That God will not always chide, nor keep his Anger for ever.*

A third is taken from the numerous Prophetical Promises, agreeing with these first Proofs.

In the first place, That of the Incarnation of JESUS CHRIST seems to have great force in it, if we attend to it ever so little; for thereby he has ennobled all Human Nature, and become the * Brother of Mankind;

* Though the Son of God had not made so near an Approach to Mankind, as he has done by assuming human

which single Thought might be sufficient to make us to presume that none of that Race, whose Nature God assum'd, shall perish eternally.

But let us enter further into the Design of this Incarnation, and consider what the Scriptures teach us upon this Subject: they every where declare, that JESUS CHRIST came to *save all Men*; and this is repeated in almost every Page of the New Testament *. 'Tis true, that among the Divines who maintain the Eternity of Torments, those called *Particularists*, understand by *all Men*, the Elect chosen out of all Nations; and the *Universalists*, take the Words, as a Proof that GOD offers all Men the Grace necessary for Salvation: but such Divines as deny the Eternity of Hell-Torments, and have a better Title to the denomination of *Universalists* than the former, believe that GOD, declaring his desire that *all Men should be saved*, will accomplish it in its utmost Extent. It expresses, say they, a positive Will, which sooner

human Nature, the bare Relations between Man and the Divinity would have been a very strong Proof on this Occasion. St. *Paul* confirms what the *Pagans* acknowledged, that Men are not only the *Work of God*, but also *his Race*. What Consequences might not be drawn from that Expression?

* It is surprizing that this Expression of *all Men*, a thousand times repeated in Scripture, should make no Impression on the Minds of Men; while those of *Eternity*, and *for ever*, have been received without restriction; though it is evident, that the words last mentioned are used in Scripture, when speaking of Things now ended.

ſooner or later will have its Effect, and not a bare Wiſh that all Men may be ſaved.

Let us come to ſomething more particular. JESUS CHRIST came to reſtore all things; of which mention is made, *Acts* ii. But if he ſaves only a ſmall Number, all things are ſo far from being reſtored, that there would be but a handful ſo favoured, whilſt the multitude would continue eternally in Diſorder and Deſolation.

No ſooner did *Adam* fall, but the Promiſe of Salvation was made to him, and in him to all his Poſterity, whom he repreſented? St. *Paul* is very expreſs on this Subject, 1 *Cor.* xv. 22. *As in* Adam *all die, ſo in* Chriſt *ſhall all be made alive.* This Proof is, I think, one of the ſtrongeſt, by the compariſon made between *Adam* and *Chriſt*. Therefore as it is paſt diſpute, that in *Adam all die*, ſo it is unexceptionably true * that in *Chriſt all ſhall be made alive.*

But what the Apoſtle ſubjoins is a Proof, that this will happen at very different Periods. *But every Man* (ſays he, *v.* 23.) *in his own Order:* Chriſt *the Firſt-fruits*; *afterwards they that are* Chriſt's, *at his coming.* It is plain that by this coming, he means the laſt Judgment; and by thoſe that are Chriſt's,

* Here the Words *all Men* cannot poſſibly be underſtood in an equivocal Senſe, like the Terms *Eternity* and *for Ever*; becauſe, if we may believe the Apoſtle, it is as certain that all Men ſhall be reſtored by *Chriſt*, as it is evident they are All become Mortal through *Adam*.

the Souls of the Juſt: Nevertheleſs, he afterward ſpeaks of another future Period, which he calls the End, *v.* 24. *And then the End ſhall come, when he ſhall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even to the Father.* But what is this End? *That all Things ſhould be ſubjected to him*, ver. 28. But is it a forced or voluntary Subjection? If the former, he would never ſpeak of it as a thing to come; becauſe from the Foundation of the World all things are ſubject to him; if the latter, there is no more Hell.

What followeth, ſeems to prove this very clearly; *The laſt Enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed* (ſays St. *Paul*) *is Death.* Is the ſeparation of the Soul from the Body, the *Death* here meant? No; for after the coming of *Chriſt*, there is no room for that Death. Beſides, this ſeparation is not what the Scripture calls *Death*, which is only termed *Sleep*; and particularly in this Chapter, where the Apoſtle never ſpeaks of the *Dead*, but under the notion of Perſons fallen aſleep; but what he calls *Death*, the *great Death*, 2 *Cor.* i. 10. is a ſeparation from GOD, which was the Death ſpoken of to *Adam*, *In the Day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.* And without this Death there would be no Hell; ſo that when it is deſtroyed, Hell will be no more.

Another Proof, that the Death here mentioned, is not temporal Death, is, that St. *Paul* ranks it with the Enemies of GOD, over whom

whom JESUS CHRIST ſhould reign 'till they were all deſtroyed: but temporal Death, far from being of the number of his Enemies, is an Agent of his Power employed in executing his Orders; it is the ſpiritual Death which is called *Enmity againſt GOD*, a Rebellion of the Creature againſt the Creator; it is this Death, I ſay, to which the Title of *Enemy* perfectly agrees.

Let us obſerve, that St. *Paul* ſuppoſes this Enemy ſhall ſubſiſt even after *Chriſt*'s coming, and that he ſhall reign 'till it is aboliſhed, as well as all *Rule*, and *Authority* and *Power*, 1 *Cor.* xv. 54. It is evident that theſe Titles of *Rule*, &c. can refer only to the Power of Darkneſs, and the Sovereignty of the Devil; ſince all Earthly Dominion ſhall then have had an end. But what is to be the View of deſtroying all thoſe Enemies? It anſwers an End worthy of the wiſe Creator, that of *reuniting to himſelf* all his Creatures, by a voluntary Subjection. *After having reigned over them with a Rod of Iron*, Pſal. ii. *and conſumed them in his Wrath; then the Son ſhall deliver up the Kingdom to his Father, that GOD may be All and in All* *.

Theſe laſt Words ſeem irrefragably to prove the Abolition of Sin and Hell, and the Reſtoration of all the Creatures; which is further confirmed by the Exclamation of St. *Paul*,

* Theſe Words would have no Senſe, if Hell-Torments were eternal. God can never be *All and in All*, but by reſtoring the Order of things.

O Death where is thy Sting? O Grave where is thy Victory? * If *Death* and the *Grave* have no other ſting but Sin, and this ſting muſt be deſtroyed; does it not hence follow, that Hell muſt be deſtroyed alſo? ſince 'tis certain, that if Sin were killed in Men, there would be no more Hell.

You'll grant, Sir, that this ſingle Chapter would afford Arguments ſtrong enough upon this Subject. But not to ſtop here, let us ſee whether the Scriptures do not teach the ſame Truth in other places.

St. *Paul*, in the firſt of *Coloſſians*, declares what was the good-pleaſure of GOD in ſending his Son into the World. *For it pleaſed the Father*, (ſays he) *that in him ſhould all Fulneſs dwell; that by him*, v. 20. *he might reconcile all things to himſelf, whether they be things in*

* We find it in other Tranſlations, *O Hell where is thy Victory?* Common Senſe ſhould lead us to eſpouſe this Verſion. We know the Scriptures promiſcuouſly uſe the Words *Hell* and *Grave*; if the *Grave* ſignified nothing here but the Piece of Ground, where the dead Body is laid, how could this Exclamation be worſe placed, in which St. *Paul* triumphs? After bidding defiance to *Death*, what could he mean by the *Grave?* Can we diſtinguiſh one from the other, and is the Victory over this Piece of Ground ſuch a mighty Matter? But it may be ſaid, perhaps, this is no Solution of the Difficulty. St. *Paul* triumphs over the *Grave* in relation to the Reſurrection; it muſt then give up all the incloſed Dead, as well bad as good: A wonderful Subject of Triumph! The *Grave* will reſtore Men their Bodies, to feel the heat of everlaſting Fire. Would the Reſurrection in this Caſe be an Advantage to the Damned, and a Subject proper for an Apoſtle's Exultation?

in Heaven, or things on Earth. Observe here, an *Universal Reconciliation* of all the Creatures to GOD; a Truth as well ascertain'd in *verses* 15, 16, 17, 18. In the 15th and 18th, JESUS CHRIST is called the *first-born from the dead, and the first-born of every Creature, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence*; and in the 16th it is said, *That all things that were created by him, were also created for him.*

How is JESUS CHRIST the *first-born of every Creature?* He could not be so by his Divinity; for in this Sense he is not a Creature; nor by his Humanity, since an infinite number of Creatures were in being before his temporal Birth. If he is then *called the first-born of every Creature*; that Expression can signify only, that he is the *First-fruits* of them, the elder Brother; now, if the *First-fruits* are *holy, the Lump will be holy also*; and if the Son, *as Heir* * *of all things*, Heb. i. 2. *has asked all the Ends of the Earth for his Inheritance*, Psal. ii. is it not to reconcile them to GOD, by translating them from the Power of Darkness?

In the first of *Ephesians*, the same Truth is declared. Ver. 9, 10. mention is made of *the*

* The Psalm from whence this is taken, deserves to be quoted more at large. The Son of God is introduced declaring the Power God had given him to ask an important Favour of him, *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts*, &c. What Design shall we ascribe to the Son of God in a request of such a nature?

Myſtery of the Will of GOD, which he had hitherto kept to himſelf; and what is this Myſtery? *To gather together in one all things in Chriſt, both which are in Heaven, and which are on Earth, even in him*; and when will he do this? *In the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of Times*, that is to ſay, *When all things ſhall be ſubjected to him, and he ſhall be exalted above all Principalities and Powers, and Dignities and Dominions, and above every Name that is named, both in this Life and that which is to come.*

The ſame *Apoſtle*, in the 11th of the *Romans*, declares as a great Myſtery, that thoſe who before had rebelled againſt GOD, and been cut off becauſe of their Unbelief, ſhould be again grafted in, and at laſt obtain Mercy; to which he adds, *GOD hath concluded them all under Unbelief, that he might have mercy on all.* After which he makes this Exclamation, wherein much more is underſtood than expreſſed, *O the depth both of the Riches and Wiſdom of GOD! How unſearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways paſt finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his Counſellor?*

Let us here remark the relation theſe Words bear to thoſe quoted from the 1ſt of *Eph.* concerning *the Will of GOD, which 'till now he had kept within his own Breaſt*, and which is nothing but the *thought* of a Saviour, or the deſign he had conceived of *Mercy to all*; which is evident from the Concluſion,

For

For of him, and by him, and for him are all things, &c *.

It would be eaſy here to quote ſtill a great many other Paſſages to the ſame purpoſe, as *Heb.* ii. 9. where it is ſaid that JESUS CHRIST *taſted Death for all Men*; and elſewhere, *That he is made the propitiation for the Sins of the whole World.* And in the 2d of *Phil. That every Knee ſhall bow at the Name of* JESUS, *of things in Heaven*, &c.

I ſhall only dwell a little on the laſt Verſes of the 5th of *Romans*, that are very clear in this Caſe; where the Apoſtle compares JESUS CHRIST to *Adam*, as alſo the Fruits we reap from each. *As by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin, ſo that Death is paſſed upon all Men; in like manner by the* † *Righteouſneſs of one, the Gift is come upon all Men to Juſtification of Life.* For adds he, *As by the Diſobedience of one, many*, &c.

The Word *many* in this place, undoubtedly comprehends all Mankind; *All were made Sinners by* Adam, therefore *all ought to be made Righteous by* JESUS CHRIST. And

* If whatever exiſts *of him and by him*, ought to be *for him*, what can we think will be the final State of Men, who derived their Exiſtence from him, and by whom alone they ſubſiſt?

† St. *Paul* in the 15th Verſe, exalts the *Gift* above the *Offence*; he obſerves that the Gift ought to have more influence to make us happy, than the Offence to make us miſerable. If the Effects of the Offence were univerſal, what may we not expect from the Gift, if it ought to exceed it?

And here we may very justly apply that excellent but abused Text: *Where Sin did abound, Grace did much more abound.* That is, the Grace of CHRIST JESUS is so abundant, that it shall at last destroy in all Mankind the Sins they inherited from *Adam*; so that *as Sin has reigned unto Death, in like manner Grace should reign by Righteousness unto Eternal Life.* As if he had said, the Reign of *Sin* and *Death* must come to an end, to make room for that of *Grace* through all Eternity.

I believe, Sir, it would be superfluous, to add more Authorities to what I have now produced; since these include the most distinct and clear Instructions deliver'd, concerning the Design of the Incarnation and Death of JESUS CHRIST.

LETTER III.

Wherein the Sense of the Conclusion of the Second Commandment is examined, and new Reflections concerning the Nature of Justice are drawn from it.

SIR,

I Told you, that a second Argument for the Opinion in question, is taken from the express Declarations in Scripture, That GOD keeps not his Resentment for ever. I shall now enquire into the Strength of this Proof.

And

And here I find, toward the Concluſion of the Second Commandment, a poſitive Declaration of the eternal Laws of Juſtice and Mercy. In the firſt Part, God ſhews himſelf as a powerful and jealous God, puniſhing Iniquity to the fourth Generation; in the laſt, he is repreſented as *exerting Mercy to thouſands of Generations.* Doth not this mean, that Juſtice in his Puniſhments is reſtrained within certain Bounds, whereas Mercy knows no Limits?

But to this it may be objected, That if any Bounds could be ſet to Divine Juſtice, what becomes of the Infinity of God's Perfections? To which I anſwer, That Divine Juſtice, conſidered in itſelf, is without Bounds; but that its Infinity does not conſiſt in puniſhing to the ſame extent; but rather in being *infinitely equitable*, entering into an infinite Detail of what can render every Creature more or leſs culpable, and more or leſs pardonable: in weighing, with a perfectly *equal* Balance, not only Actions, but particularly Intentions, Motives, Knowledge, Circumſtances, Temptations; in a word, in entering into the *infinite Proportions* of Rewards and Puniſhments, ſo that it inclines not to one ſide more than the other. Now, was it to puniſh infinitely, there muſt needs be a heavier weight in the Scale of Rigour, than in that of Clemency, which cannot ſuit with the Idea of Juſtice.

Rigour indeed muſt be exerciſed againſt all Diſobedience and Unrighteouſneſs; but when by

by its devouring Fire, it hath entirely consumed them, *Juſtice* ſhall ceaſe to be *rigorous*, but not ceaſe to be *juſt*.

But to return to the Concluſion of the Second Commandment; I do not ſuppoſe any one pretends to take the Words literally, or imagines that God makes Children accountable for the Iniquities of their Fathers; ſeeing it is evident that this is only a way of ſpeaking, which gives us to underſtand, that there is no manner of Proportion between the Duration of Puniſhments inflicted by Juſtice, and that of the Effects of Mercy.

But how can this Truth be reconciled with the Opinion of eternal Torments? In that caſe, except the ſmall Number of the Elect, who are but a Handful in compariſon of all Mankind, God would ſhew his Mercy to the reſt, during the ſhort Space of this Life only; after which, he would pour out upon them all the Rigour of his Vengeance, not for Thouſands and Millions of Generations, which would be ſaying nothing, but after all thoſe Ages are paſt, the Eternity of their Torments would ſtill be to commence again.

Let us likewiſe conſider, to what purpoſe Mercy ſhould be exerciſed during this Life, towards theſe miſerable Creatures; toward far greater number, who are Pagans, to give them Life, Nouriſhment, Cloathing, natural Light, and a Senſe of Conſcience. The Chriſtians are infinitely more favoured, by being inſtructed in the Will of God, in all

reſpects,

respects, who in this Life provides them with all Means necessary to Salvation.

These, I must acknowledge, are great effects of *Mercy*, which render the latter obnoxious to Judgment and Hell, if they abuse them; but how considerable soever the Effects of Mercy may be in this Life, though it should continue a thousand or ten thousand Years, yet it would bear no manner of proportion to an Eternity of Torments; that which is *finite*, bearing no manner of proportion to what is *infinite*: so that we must alter the Text, and say, That God shews *Mercy to the fourth*, but *punishes to the thousandth Generation*; which indeed would be saying nothing, since any imaginable number, though equal to the Drops of the Ocean, would vanish before *endless Ages*.

I believe, Sir, I have said enough upon this Sentence of the Second Commandment, and must reserve for another Letter the Citation of some other Passages of Scripture, which confirm the same Truth.

LETTER IV.

Being an Analysis of the 107*th Psalm, and Remarks on those Words*, He will not always chide, *&c.* Psal. ciii.

SIR,

THE Scriptures are so full of Declarations of the same stamp, with the Conclusion

cluſion of the Second Commandment, that I am at a loſs only which to chuſe. To avoid being tedious, I ſhall confine myſelf to thoſe that are moſt expreſs on the Subject.

Firſt, then, I find the whole 107th *Pſalm*, which, by a kind of Allegory, ſets before our Eyes a Repreſentation of the wonderful Ways of the Divine Wiſdom, Juſtice, and Mercy. The firſt Verſe is as it were an Abridgment of the whole, *O give Thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; becauſe his Mercy endureth for ever.* What does this Declaration teach us? That immenſe Goodneſs is not confined to the ſhort ſpace of this Life *, ſince it endureth for ever, it muſt certainly be employed in the Life to come, for the benefit of ſuch Subjects as ſhall be capable of receiving its Influence.

But who are thoſe Subjects? The ſame *Pſalm* is very expreſs on that Article; they are ſuch as having been Rebels againſt the ſtrong God, have been humbled, mortified, and cruſhed by the Severity of Juſtice; who have felt inexpreſſible Anguiſh on the account of their Tranſgreſſions; who have been as it were *chain'd up in Darkneſs, bound with Affliction*

* Nothing is more contrary to good Senſe, than to confine the Clemency and Mercy of God to the Space of this Life, which is only the firſt Hour of Man's Duration. Will a different manner of exiſting, place him out of the reach of the effects of a Goodneſs, which is eternally the ſame? Doth the Separation of the Soul from the Body make it ceaſe to be the Work of God, and ſuch a Work as he cannot abandon?

tion and Iron, and ſhut up within Gates of Braſs; who have gone down into the Depths, and whoſe Souls have been melted, becauſe of Trouble: ſuch, I ſay, having fed plentifully on the Fruit of their Works, and born the Puniſhment of their Sins, ſhall be the Objects of this *Goodneſs*, that endures for ever; *They ſhall cry unto the Lord in their Diſtreſs, and he will bring them out of their Trouble, and will reſcue them from Darkneſs, and the Shadow of Death, and break their Bands in ſunder.*

But whither tend all theſe wonderful Proceedings of Juſtice and Mercy? To the Accompliſhment of that authentic Declaration; *Every Tongue ſhall give Praiſe to God, and celebrate the Goodneſs of the Lord, and his wondrous Works towards the Sons of Men.*

The Pſalm ends much the ſame way as it began; *Whoſo is wiſe, and will obſerve thoſe things, even they ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſs of the Lord*; as if he had ſaid, Let them conſider that this Goodneſs, which laſts for ever, cannot be inactive, but will be employed on the Sons of Men, in proportion as they ſhall be more or leſs diſpoſed to receive its benign Effects.

One of the ſtrongeſt Expreſſions againſt the Eternity of Torments, is this, *He will not always chide, nor keep his Anger for ever**: a Declaration more ſtrong, and the further removed

* A Father doth not chide his Children, whom he is reſolved to abandon; by chiding he ſhows his Deſign of correcting and reducing them to their Duty.

removed from Ambiguity, as it is taken from the Nature and Perfections of God himself, and perfectly agrees with the Ideas of Justice, which every one finds engraved upon his own Mind.

We are agreed, that *unchangeable Truths* ought to be our Rule for distinguishing what is to be taken in a literal Sense; but when the Letter itself speaks in a manner conformable to those Truths, why should we not receive it in its full extent? To say that this Declaration regards none but Believers, is shuffling out of the Difficulty by a very gross Evasion. Let us therefore suppose ourselves inclined to extol the Clemency of a King towards those who had offended him, and that we should give as an Evidence of it, *That he doth not always chide, or keep his Anger for ever:* Would this signify his pardoning three or four, whilst he exercised upon Millions, all the Vengeance in his power, without ever relenting*? Who then can imagine, when God represents himself to his Creatures, as *not always chiding, or keeping Resentment for ever*, that he only means this for the small number of the Elect, whilst he avenges himself to all Eternity on infinite numbers of his Creatures? It

* A Man who is irreconcileable, instead of passing for just, is charged with Inhumanity. Our Saviour sets no Bounds to the Mercy which the just Man ought to show to his greatest Enemies. This alone, by way of consequence, would be sufficient, even though God had not explain'd himself by positively declaring, *he will not keep his Anger for ever.*

It remains, to make good my Engagement, that I ſhould produce ſome Prophetical Promiſes conſonant to the preceding Proofs; give me leave to refer that Article to another Letter.

LETTER V.

Wherein are produced the Prophetical Promiſes agreeing with the preceding Proofs.

SIR,

ALthough I have obliged myſelf to produce ſeveral Sentences or Promiſes out of the Prophetical Books, which may ſerve to ſupport the Opinion in queſtion, I ſhould think them almoſt ſuperfluous, after the preceding Proofs. Beſides, whatever Arguments may be taken from the Prophets, ought to be look'd upon as concluſive only, ſo far as they agree both with the *unchangeable Truths* we have laid down as our Foundation, and with the expreſs and poſitive Declarations of the New Teſtament, that are not figurative. The Phraſeology of the Prophets is ſo ambiguous and obſcure, that unleſs we uſe the Rule which we have agreed on, and that with great Caution, we may run into a thouſand Extravagancies, which we may ſuppoſe well grounded, under pretence of ſome Expreſſions, whoſe Meaning we do not comprehend.

I ſhall therefore employ the Authority of the Prophets only as collateral Teſtimonies that

that are ſufficient only, as they agree with the former Evidences.

I ſhall not attempt to cite all the Paſſages that might be of ſervice to my Argument; that would be an endleſs Taſk; but content myſelf with examining the Spirit and Deſign of ſome Prophetical Promiſes according to the Rule of *unalterable Truths*, or of ſuch as are clearly revealed to us.

The 40th of *Iſaiah* might afford ſome Teſtimony in this reſpect; where there is a Promiſe of the Reſtoration of all things. What elſe can be meant by thoſe Expreſſions, That *every Valley ſhall be exalted, and every Mountain and Hill ſhall be made low, and the Crooked ſhall be made ſtrait, and the rough Places plain*; I ſay, what can be meant, but a ſpiritual Reparation relating to the Souls of Men?

It moreover appears, that this muſt be an univerſal Reſtoration, becauſe it follows; *The Glory of the Lord ſhall be revealed, and all Fleſh ſhall ſee it:* as if he had ſaid, It is the Sin and Corruption of Men, that obſtruct the Manifeſtation of this Glory; but at laſt, thoſe Obſtacles being removed, *All Fleſh*, *i. e.* all Men ſhall be Witneſſes and Partakers thereof; which St. *John Baptiſt* repeats after *Iſaiah*, in Terms ſtill more expreſs, *All Fleſh* (ſays he) *ſhall ſee the Salvation of God.* Now every one knows, that in Scripture this way of ſpeaking implies more than being a mere Spectator.

I know we may restrain the Meaning of those Words to something less general; and should any one dispute it with me, I'd easily give it up: but, as this Testimony by itself would be insufficient, so being ushered in by so many others, it ought not to stand for nothing.

Here is another of the same sort, *Isaiah* xlv. 23. *I have sworn by myself, the Word is gone out of my Mouth in Righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every Knee shall bow, every Tongue shall swear.* Ver. 24. *Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I Righteousness and Strength*; after which he concludes, *In the Lord shall all the Seed of* Israel *be justified, and shall glory.* Which Testimony is so much the more to be regarded, as God here makes use of the most express and oftenest repeated Oath, and as the Phrases are not very figurative. The Apostle St. *Paul* quotes this Text in these words, *Rom.* xiv. 11. *Every Tongue shall give praise to God*; which sure cannot be applied to the Damned.

It appears likewise by this Abundance of *Righteousness* and *Strength* in God, that he gives us hereby to understand, that he is able at last to make all his Creatures *righteous*; and though he mentions none but the Posterity of *Israel*, if the Words are taken literally, yet even this will support my Argument; since it is beyond dispute, that the number of depraved *Israelites* vastly surpassed that of the Good. If therefore all *Israel*, according to

the Fleſh, muſt be ſaved, *Rom.* ii. 26. it follows, that thoſe who have been ſometime rebellious and *lopt off*, ſhall be again grafted in, and called to Life. And is it not in this Senſe, at leaſt partly, that our Saviour repreſents himſelf to us, as *the Deliverer of the Captives*, who reſcues Priſoners from their Confinement; as a Perſon, *Iſaiah* ix. who *brings to light thoſe who inhabited the Regions of the Shadow of Death?* And muſt not this be the Meaning of theſe otherwiſe obſcure Words of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, chap. xxiv. ver. 22. *They ſhall be gathered together, as Priſoners are gathered in the Pit, and ſhall be ſhut up in the Priſon, and after many days ſhall they be viſited.*

Having now ſaid enough from *Iſaiah*, let us ſee whether *Jeremiah* will furniſh us with any thing to our preſent purpoſe. As he does not ſpeak ſo clearly as *Iſaiah*, and makes uſe of figurative Expreſſions, I ſhall offer only as ſo many Conjectures and Probabilities, whatever I obſerve from him.

Jeremy, in his 25th Chapter, makes an Enumeration of all Nations, beginning with *Jeruſalem*, to which he preſents, in the Name of God, the Cup of his Anger, and declares that *Jeruſalem* ſhall drink of it firſt, and that all other Nations ſhould infallibly do the ſame after her. Again, Chap. xlv. *&* *ſeq.* he addreſſes himſelf to each of thoſe Nations in particular; and having denounced the Judgments prepared for them, he at laſt ſubjoins, *Yet will*

will I bring again the Captivity of Moab *in the latter days.* He says the same of *Egypt*, and the Children of *Ammon.* Let us now consider the Design of the Prophecy, and wave the Figure. If this Prophecy ought not to be confined to the literal Sense, but ought to be allowed a spiritual Sense, the following, in my opinion, might be given of it.

By the Nations in general, we may understand *all Mankind*, and by *Jerusalem* the *Church*; the Cup that she must drink of are *Afflictions*, or Operations of Divine Justice, to purify her; and this same Cup that all the other Nations shall be forced to drink of after her, are the Effects of the same Justice, which finding in them much more Matter to consume, shall therefore be infinitely more bitter.

That this is the true Sense of this Figure, we cannot well doubt, if we credit St. *Peter*'s Explication of it, 1 Epist. chap. iv. ver. 17. *The Time*, saith he, *is come, that Judgment must begin at the House of God; and if it begin first at us, what shall the End of them be that obey not the Gospel of God?* But, to return to *Jeremy*; since after he had denounced those terrible Judgments against the rebellious Nations, he promises them *Deliverance* from their *Captivity* in the latter Days; may we not understand this of a spiritual Deliverance, and that the rather, because we have not seen those Prophecies fulfilled in the literal Sense?

We come next to *Ezekiel*, in the 16th Chapter of whose Prophecy there is an Allegory that may have some relation to the Argument we are upon, though it mentions it only figuratively. Figures themselves have their own *Design*, and *Truth*, which it is of importance to discover. Here I shall endeavour once more to propose my Conjectures.

The *Jewish* Church is here represented under the Emblem of an Adultéress, who had rendered herself so culpable by her base Conduct, that *Sodom* and *Samaria* are declared less criminal than she. After the most cutting Rebukes, GOD declares he will exercise his Fury and Jealousy upon her; in short, that *she shall bear the whole Punishment of her Iniquity*; nevertheless, he afterwards promises he will remember his Covenant, and establish it with her for ever, and even with *Sodom* and *Samaria*; ver. 55. *When thy Sister* Sodom, *and her Daughters, shall return to their former Estate, and* Samaria *and her Daughter shall return to their former Estate, then thou and thy Daughters shall return to your former Estate.* Now this seems to insinuate, that the Deliverance promised to *Jerusalem*, or the *Church*, shall one day be also extended to the most rebellious Nations, but yet with great difference in regard to Prerogatives. Ver. 61. *Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed when thou shalt receive thy Sisters, thine elder and thy younger, and I will give them*

them unto thee for Daughters, but not by thy Covenant. I know this may be explained of the Reception the *Jews* gave the *Gentiles*, who embraced Chriſtianity; but, beſides that thoſe two Senſes may both ſtand together, without deſtroying one another, and that the latter, which is particular, does not hinder a more univerſal Accompliſhment; I ſhall not inſiſt upon it, but propoſe it barely as a Conjecture.

Ezekiel furniſhes us with ſome other Teſtimonies, in his 36th *Chapter*; where having upbraided the *Iſraelites* with their Infidelity, he declares that GOD will judge them according to their Ways, and puniſh their Miſdeeds; but at laſt, ver. 21. he promiſes, *That he will bring them back from their Captivity, and ſprinkle clean Water upon them, and give them a new Heart, and cleanſe them from all their Filthineſs.* And ver. 35. *That the Land that was deſolate ſhall become as the Garden of* Eden, *&c.* The 37th Chapter is full of the like Promiſes, as well as the End of the 39th, which concludes with theſe words, *Neither will I hide my Face any more from them, when I have poured out my Spirit upon the Houſe of* Iſrael.

Here it would be ſuperfluous to quote all the Paſſages of the Prophets, that may relate to our Subject. I ſhall only mention the laſt Verſes of the Prophet *Micah*, as leſs allegorical than thoſe already cited. *After*, ſaith

he, *the Land has lain desolate, because of its Inhabitants, and the People, the Flock of thine Heritage, shall be fed with thy Rod; the Nations shall see, and be confounded with all their Might*, &c. *They shall not run to the Lord when dismayed, and shall be afraid of the Lord our God. Who is a God like unto thee, that passes by the Transgressions of the Remnant of thy Heritage? He retaineth not his Anger for ever, because he delighteth in Mercy.* Let us here observe the Force of this last Sentence, which is precisely the same with that on which we have laid so much Stress, *viz. That he will not keep his Anger for ever; he will*, as the Prophet *Micah* adds, *have compassion upon us, subdue our Iniquities, and cast all our Sins into the Depths of the Sea*, &c.

Here now is a plain Distinction betwixt the People of GOD, and the Nations of whom it is said, *That they shall be ashamed, and lick the Dust*, &c. However, they are here represented as running to GOD in a great Terror; which signifies, on their part, a Return: and Terror, which is not that of the Damned, which only prompts them to fly; whereas this moves them to run to the Lord.

The Conclusion of the 22d *Psalm* agrees very well with those last Words; *All the Ends of the Earth shall turn to the Lord, all the Families of the People shall fall down before thee, for the Government belongeth to the Lord,*

and

and he ruleth over the Nations; *All thoſe who go down to the Duſt ſhall bow themſelves, and none can keep alive his own Soul.* Let us likewiſe ſee the 102d *Pſalm*, ver. 15. *Then the Heathen ſhall fear the Name of the Lord, and all the Kings of the Earth his Glory.* Ver. 22. *When the People are gathered together, and the Kingdoms, to ſerve the Lord.* And who knows but thoſe repeated Apoſtrophes and Exhortations, *Praiſe the Lord all ye Nations, praiſe him all ye People*, may be ſo many Prophecies, which inform us what ſhall at laſt really happen, as well as ſeveral other Paſſages; ſuch as *Pſal.* xcvi. 1. *Sing unto the Lord, all the Earth*; and *Pſal.* cxlv. 21. *Let all Fleſh bleſs his holy Name, for ever and ever.* In a word, the laſt Verſe of the Book of *Pſalms* ſeems to conclude with a Wiſh to the ſame purpoſe, *Let every thing that hath Breath praiſe the Lord.*

I don't believe, Sir, you'll require any more Proofs upon this Subject; you may take theſe in what Senſe you pleaſe; I only beg you'll conſider there is nothing in the Senſe I have put upon them, but what agrees perfectly well with *unchangeable Truths*, that is, with the Ideas we have of the Nature and Perfections of God; nor any thing but what is agreeable to the Truths clearly revealed to us, concerning the Deſign of the Redemption.

I don't know, Sir, whether you'll think I have acquitted myſelf of the Taſk you laid

upon me. But, not to send you back to my former Letters, I shall represent them to you in one single Stroke.

The first draws its Arguments from the Nature of GOD, and the unchangeable Ideas we have of his Perfections.

The second proceeds upon the Design of the Incarnation and Death of *Christ*.

The third turns on the Conclusion of the Second Commandment, from whence I draw new Reflections on the Nature of Justice.

The fourth contains a sort of Paraphrase on the 107th *Psalm*, and in particular, considers the Energy of this Declaration, *That God will not always chide.*

This needs no Summary of its Contents. If you have any Objections, Sir, to make, I shall listen to them very willingly.

OBJECTION.

"It is hard to conceive how a State of "Blasphemy and Despair, such as that of the "Damned is represented, should be proper "to purify and re-establish them in Virtue "and Bliss."

An

An ANSWER to the OBJECTION;

OR,

A DISSERTATION concerning the *Nature*, *Origin*, and *Duration* of *Evil*.

IT is much more difficult to ſuppoſe, that *Evil* will exiſt eternally, than that it may have an end. Rage and Blaſphemy will not purify the Damned; on the contrary, they will be reſtored by the Deſtruction of the evil Principle that cauſes them.

That this evil Principle may be deſtroyed, is a thing neither impoſſible nor incomprehenſible; ſince *Evil* has not an *eternal Principle*, it is not the Production of GOD, it is a Diſorder accidentally befallen his Works that diſfigures them; an Incident contrary to the original Purpoſe of GOD, that all of them ſhould be good. If GOD has not thought proper to hinder it for a time, will he therefore deſiſt from his firſt Intention, and ſuffer the Workmanſhip in which he deſigned to draw a Picture of himſelf, to be for ever diſfigured? Will he beſtow on this Diſorder a hidden Virtue to exiſt for ever? Shall we, in ſhort, aſſign the Will of GOD as the Cauſe of the Eternity, of which it is ſuppoſed capable? No Man will venture on the Thought. It muſt then be found in the Nature of *Evil*, or rather in the Will of Man,

which is the ſole Origin of *Evil*; for *Evil* exiſts not of itſelf.

This Theſis may be ſupported by the Experience of what we ſee in this Life. GOD, it may be ſaid, in this World wills the Deſtruction of Evil in Man, he ſpares no Means to obtain this End; but Man refuſes the Good deſigned him by God; he refuſes to be healed; GOD commits no Force on his Liberty: and there is reaſon to believe, he will not lay a Reſtraint on him in the next Life.

To this I anſwer, That there is really reaſon to preſume, that GOD will never conſtrain Man's Liberty; but that there is, at the ſame time, a ſtrong Probability, that the Will of Man will not obſtinately perſiſt in *Evil*. If it be aſked, Why then does it happen to be ſo in this Life? I anſwer, That we muſt here make a diſtinction of no ſmall moment.

Man can never *hate Good*, or *love Evil*, conſidered as ſuch; when in this Life, he obſtinately prefers *Evil* to *Good*, this only happens by the Illuſion of his Senſes, which preſent him falſe Goods inſtead of the real. He is amuſed with them, if not ſatisfied. He makes himſelf deaf, when he pleaſes, to the Rebukes of Conſcience, and has even the Dexterity to lull them aſleep for a time, by taking the Shadow of Virtue for its Subſtance. He never conſents to his own Ruin, by the Deter-

Determination of his Will, but so far as he is either deceived, or imposes on himself.

But in the future Life, the Case will not be the same; Man will not find Objects to amuse him, and stupify himself; he must then listen to the Reproofs of Truth, in their whole Force; and will not have it in his power to deceive himself with Appearances and false Virtues. He will then see *Evil* such as it really is. He will see himself; he will be obliged to abhor himself for what Crimes he has voluntarily committed; and though possibly he may not have such a distinct view, till he has passed through a confused State of Despair, Rage, and Blasphemy, as is pretended, it is highly probable, that this Rage will be turned against Man himself, more than GOD; that he will hate himself, as the only Author of his Misery, and be so far from hating the Deity, and accusing him of Injustice, as it is commonly imagined, that he will do Homage to infinite Goodness and Justice.

Thus when the Wicked are introduced as speaking to the *Hills* and *Mountains*, they seem only to want a hiding-place, and not to accuse Divine Justice; they even give the Name of *Lamb* to their Judge. When we read in the *Revelation* of St. *John*, of Men who blaspheme the Name of GOD, for the Plagues sent upon the Earth, the Apostle speaks only of Men in this World, and consequently still in a State of Stupidity, which

reſembles Madneſs. The Scripture ſpeaks of the State of the Damned, as of a State of *Weeping and Gnaſhing of Teeth*, which implies nothing againſt their hating themſelves. Could Man but accuſe GOD of Injuſtice, he would be comforted with the Reflection; but nothing will be ſo mortifying to him, as his being unable to lay the blame upon any but himſelf.

But may not the Deference he ſhall at laſt pay to Divine Juſtice, be ſomewhat ſerviceable to him, as a remote Preparation for his Removal into a leſs miſerable State, and from thence into a better? Is there here any Impoſſibility, either on GOD's part or Man's? Bare good Senſe approves of the Thought, and Scripture would ſupport it by the moſt expreſs Declarations, ſhould I undertake to quote them.

Here is one Paſſage, among many others, *The Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the Works of the Devil.* If ſome Men are damned paſt all Relief, the Work of the Devil will ſubſiſt for ever; but the Deſign of the Son of GOD was to deſtroy it: therefore, upon the above Suppoſition, he would fall ſhort of what he deſigned.

A ſecond not leſs expreſs Teſtimony is, that Chriſt *hath deſtroyed Death, and him that had the power of Death*, &c. But if there be Men who are damned to all Eternity, the Empire of Death will not be deſtroyed, the Sove-

reignty

reignty of the Devil will be far more extenſive than that of JESUS CHRIST; the former would ſhare with the latter the Prerogative of reigning eternally.

It is likewiſe ſaid, That *God will contend with all Fleſh*, and *that he will chide with Man*; but then it is added, that he will not do ſo *for ever*. It is no hard matter to conceive the manner of his chiding and contending; we all know, that Conſcience accompanies Man even to Hell; that it ſerves as an *Evidence* to condemn his Conduct, and plead the Cauſe of GOD. Will any one here ſay, according to the vulgar Opinion, that it does the Office of an Executioner, and will act as ſuch eternally? Would it be worthy of GOD to employ ſuch an Agent, a Principle of Truth, only to torment Man, without amending or reforming him?

The Words now cited overturn an Opinion ſo injurious to infinite Goodneſs, and plainly ſhew us, that if GOD chides for a time, he has all along an End in view worthy of the *Father of Spirits*, who not having made *Evil*, contends with his Creatures, only in order to deſtroy it. Thoſe words of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, chap. lvii. ver. 16. deſerve to be quoted at full length; *I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the Spirit ſhould fail before me, and the Souls which I have made.*

Such is the Purpoſe of GOD, and he has been pleaſed to declare it to us *; though he had not made any ſuch Declaration, we ought to have preſumed it; common Senſe would teach us, that *Good* having a *Divine Principle*, ought to be ſtronger than *Evil*, which is eſſentially nothing but Diſorder and Depravation; that *Evil* putting Man into a State of Violence, that State cannot continue for ever; that this State of Violence ſuppoſes its contrary in Man ſtruggling againſt it, and which coming originally from GOD, cannot fail, ſooner or later, to gain the Victory over *Evil*, which is the Work of Man; that GOD being the God of Order, and the undoubted Sovereign of the Univerſe, can never conſent that Diſorder and Confuſion ſhould prevail there for ever.

OBJECTION.

"The Author has not perhaps obſerved "the Tendency of the Principles he lays "down. Thoſe Principles will infer no leſs "than the Reſtoration of the *Devils*, who "are likewiſe originally the Creatures of God, "Beings whom God at firſt ſaw to be very "good, as well as his other Works. If it is "true, that all things muſt at laſt be reduced "to

* A Truth, dictated by common Senſe itſelf, and confirmed by a poſitive Revelation from God, gains hereby a degree of Certainty nothing ſhort of Demonſtration.

" to Order, if the Eternity that ſhall ſucceed
" Time muſt be eſſentially agreeable to the
" Eternity that preceded it, then the Devils
" are to be reſtored to Bliſs; ſince there was
" no wretched Creature in the former, it fol-
" lows that there ſhall be none in the latter."

The ANSWER.

This Objection is ſo well inforced, that it alone is ſufficient to eſtabliſh what it ſeems deſigned to overturn. Of theſe two things, one muſt be allowed; either the Devils are in the ſame caſe with Men, or they are not: if they are not, what has been proved concerning the Reſtoration of Man, does not affect them; if they are eſſentially in the ſame Condition, then whatever proves the Recovery of Men, at the ſame time proves that of the fallen Angels.

Perhaps ſeveral Perſons will think this Concluſion of ſo dangerous a nature, that to avoid the Inconveniences thereof, they'd chuſe to abandon the Syſtem of the Re-eſtabliſhment of Mankind. It would certainly be very diſmal to be obliged to live with ſuch Beings for a whole Eternity, the bare meeting with them would be frightful, ſuppoſing them as black as they are repreſented, with Horns and cloven Feet; rather than run that hazard, it were much better to knock the whole Syſtem on the head.

" But

" But to be ſerious, ſome may ſay, All " Men are not capable of thoſe panick Fears; " and I am of opinion, I ſhould not be in the " leaſt afraid of the Devils in Paradiſe; I " could wiſh to ſee them there, and to per- " ſuade myſelf, at preſent, that the thing is " poſſible; but cannot conceive how it ſhould " be ſo. How can Spirits buſied in doing " all manner of Harm to Man, as far as in " them lies, be in a way to Reſtoration?"

Whoe'er you are that makes this Objection, pray anſwer me one Queſtion in my turn. Do you perfectly know the Nature of thoſe Spirits to whom we give the Name of *Devils*; and are you thoroughly acquainted with the Nature of the *Evil* they ſtrive to inflict on Men? Now, if you do not well know either of theſe things, as I have reaſon to think you do not, can you conceive *how* and after what manner they ſhall be reſtored? Can you, on this foot, determine the Impoſſibility thereof, becauſe you cannot poſſibly, in your preſent Situation, comprehend it?

For my part, who frankly acknowledge my Ignorance in this matter, I have not attempted to prove poſitively, that the fallen Angels ſhall be reſtored; but if the Principles I have laid down for the Reſtoration of Man, will, by juſt conſequence, include theirs, ſo let it be; I do not retract it. I am one of thoſe who would not be affrighted at finding Devils in Heaven; or, to ſpeak ſeriouſly, I

am

am one of those who could not think themselves perfectly happy, did they know any Beings must be eternally miserable.

But as to this, let every one judge as he sees reason; I only intreat the Reader to observe, that Certainty can never be shaken by Uncertainty; that self-evident Principles can never be injured by a Consequence of this sort, since the Effect of it is undoubtedly more to be desired than dreaded.

LETTER VI.

Wherein the Objection, That this Opinion may lead Men to Remissness and Security, is answered.

SIR,

IN answer to the Difficulty you proposed in your last, I can assure you I foresaw it while I was writing my preceding Letters: *To what purpose is it*, said I, *to set in too clear a light Truths that may possibly encourage Licentiousness and Remissness?* Would it not be better to leave Mankind in an Error, that may be a Means to awaken their Attention, and lead them to Virtue? This Difficulty was succeeded by several Reflections, of which I shall now give you the Substance.

First then, I own that the Knowledge of this Truth is not absolutely necessary, and that we are not obliged to make it publick. We may rest satisfied with speaking of *Hell* in

in the Terms of Scripture, and leave every one to explain them in the Senſe he likes beſt. However, on a right view of things, we do not find, that the Opinion of the Chriſtian World about the Eternity of Hell Torments, produces any very remarkable effect, or proves a ſufficient Curb to prevent their going on in wicked Courſes. The fear of a violent Diſtemper of twenty or thirty Years continuance, would make a deeper Impreſſion upon them.

What can be the Reaſon of this amazing Indifference about an Evil of ſo deſperate a nature, which they profeſs to believe, and yet do nothing toward avoiding it? Among many other Cauſes, one of the principal is, that their Belief is not built on a right Knowledge of God and his Perfections; they only know that the Scripture ſpeaks of an everlaſting Fire, into which Divine Juſtice will precipitate the Wicked, there to ſuffer eternally. It is true, they imagine they believe it; but ſee how they make themſelves eaſy! Every one is perſuaded, that he himſelf is not of the number of the wicked, whoſe Portion ſhall be in the Lake of Fire and Brimſtone. In ſhort, if they are not profeſſed Highway-men, Traytors, Blaſphemers, &c. they cannot conceive that God will condemn them, to frightful and endleſs Torments. They are ſenſible indeed, that they are guilty of ſeveral Faults; but where is the Man without Sin? Beſides,

for

for these they ask Forgiveness daily: And what are the Merits of *Christ* good for, if they do not deliver Men from everlasting Misery?

Not only these Persons flatter themselves with Impunity, but even Sinners of the first magnitude, Traytors, and the Prejured, *&c.* all of them to a Man hope to escape Hell, either by repenting, as they propose to do, sooner or later; or through the infinite Mercy of GOD, that will get the better of Justice, as they speak. In reality, GOD can as easily pardon the greatest as the least Sinners, since it costs him nothing. By a single Act of his Will, he can either make a Creature happy for ever, or let him perish eternally: sure then he will not chuse the last; because this would suppose Cruelty and Revenge in an infinitely merciful and compassionate Being. Thus the more terrible Hell becomes, by supposing it eternal, every one more easily persuades himself, that Divine Mercy will exempt him from it.

At this rate, we ought to speak quite contrary to the Scriptures, and say, That *broad and wide is the Way that leadeth to Heaven, and many there be that walk in it*; whereas, the *Gate of Hell is straight and narrow, and few there be that enter in at it.* But why do I say few, when there is scarce one so wicked as to deserve it?

Hence it is evident, that the great number of Christians, who profess the Belief of the Eternity

Eternity of Hell-Torments, are so far from using it as a Motive to Holiness, that it is only made a Handle to Sloth and Security. This may seem to be a Paradox; but it is no hard matter to explain it.

I have already touched on it, and shall now repeat what I have said. The greater Disproportion the Punishment Men are threatned with seems to have, either with their Crimes*, or the Ideas they form to themselves of the Mercy of GOD, the more confidently they persuade themselves that eternal Fire will not be their Lot. But if, instead of determining the Duration of the Torments which Sinners must undergo, we should rest satisfied with telling them, *Rom.* ch. ii. That *there shall be Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth evil*; and that in so exact a Proportion, *Prov.* ch. i. *That every one shall bear the Punishment of his Iniquity, and shall eat the Fruit of his Works:* It would then be impossible for the Conscience of the most profligate not to acquiesce in this Judgment; nor could any one flatter himself with Impunity, under any Pretext whatever. This unchangeable Truth, That *God shall render to every Man according to his Works*, so often repeated in Scripture, is written in indelible Characters

* The Idea of Proportion is inseparable from that of Equity; no Proportion can be found betwixt a disorderly Life of a few Years continuance, and eternal Torments; nor is less Disproportion found betwixt such Punishment, and boundless Mercy.

Characters on the Consciences of all Men; every one may know by his own experience, how much more certain he is of the Truth of this Proposition, than of some hopes of impunity, he may with difficulty endeavour to afford himself; the latter being a laborious Fabrick of his own raising; but the former he feels within himself, without contributing in the least towards it, nay even in spite of himself.

Don't you now think, Sir, when your Objection is a little more narrowly examined into, that it loses a great deal of its Strength, and is not far from dwindling into nothing? All that can be done in favour of Antiquity and Orthodoxy, would be to grant that there may be a sort of equality * between the Advantage or Disadvantage Men may reap from those different Opinions. Some will be roused by the dread of eternal Torments, whilst others will be excited by the profound and indelible Per-

* If the Author had not told us he had made a Stretch in favour of Orthodoxy, we should have thought that he yielded too much to it; but this piece of Respect is to be excused. However, 'tis evident he could not support it long; for if we consider things rightly, we shall find, that the most frightful Ideas don't produce the greatest effects upon Men, but those that bear their own Evidence along with them, and to which common Sense is obliged to assent. Every Opinion proceeding from a false Principle destroys itself, and, which is even worse, produces a Conclusion quite contrary to what was intended. And thus the Opinion of the Eternity of Hell-Torments, is of much more use to lull Men asleep, than to awake them to their Duty.

Perſuaſion engraved on their Conſciences, as well as inculcated in the Goſpel, That *every one ſhall bear the Puniſhment of his Iniquity, and carry his own Burthen.* In a word, That *every one ſhall receive in his Body, according to what he hath done, whether it be Good, or whether it be Evil.*

Let us ſuppoſe, if you pleaſe, that as many will be awaked to a right Senſe of things, by the firſt Opinion, as by the laſt; yet I very much doubt whether the former leads as effectually to a real Converſion as the latter: becauſe Perſons in the firſt Caſe being only actuated by ſervile Fear, may eaſily reſt ſatisfied, if they have forſaken ſcandalous Sins, and heinous Crimes, that put them in fear of Hell; when once they come to lead a good Life, according to the World, they fancy themſelves intirely ſcreened from eternal Damnation, ſo that they need not give themſelves the trouble to go any farther; they are content with the loweſt place in Paradiſe; and provided they do but eſcape Hell, they aſpire at nothing more.

But thoſe who are actuated by the ſtrong Impreſſion of this Truth, *God ſhall render to every Man according to his Works*, are ſet to work after another manner. They know that GOD cannot be mocked, and that whatever a Man *ſows* that ſhall he *reap*; that as they have more or leſs employed *their Members to ſerve as Inſtruments of Righteouſneſs or Iniquity*,

quity, they ſhall more or leſs reap the Fruits of the one or other.

It muſt be acknowledged, that thoſe who ever ſo little underſtand the Rules of this unchangeable Juſtice, have much ſtronger Motives for advancing in Holineſs, than thoſe who know nothing but the threatning of eternal Puniſhment. Here I except ſuch as are animated by a filial Love, and with whom Fear is but an acceſſory Motive. I only compare one Fear with another, and ſay, that as long as a Man ſtands in need of Fear, to induce him to Obedience, and has no other Object but eternal Fire before his eyes, it may indeed make him advance ſome Steps whilſt it continues; but it ſeldom happens that he doth not return to his old Courſes, as ſoon as the Emotion is over. Whereas the other kind of Fear hath this ſuperior advantage, that its Impreſſions, tho' leſs ſenſible, are deeper, and much more durable, and ſuch as one cannot get ſo eaſily rid of, as he can of the former.

A Man who, in order to excite himſelf to Virtue, ſays to himſelf, that an everlaſting Fire is prepared for the Impenitent, is ſoon freed from this dread, by perſuading himſelf, that he either is not one of thoſe who deſerve that Name, or that he can eaſily convert himſelf. But he who knows the Rights of Juſtice, cannot quiet himſelf thus; though he is not afraid of eternal Condemnation, he is certain, that *God will not hold the Guilty innocent*. That he

he who searches the Heart, will judge every Man according to his Courses, and the Fruits of his Doings. In short, he knows very well, to use the Prophet *Jeremiah*'s Words, ch. ii. that his *own Wickedness shall correct him, and make him feel inexpressible Anguish.*

I believe, Sir, I have said more than what was necessary for answering your Objection, and that you'll own, that though it may not be absolutely necessary to inform Men upon this head, at least it is not proper to lull them to sleep. I'm inclined to think, that some serious Reflections upon the Contents of this Letter, may determine you to be of opinion, that it would be of service to a good many People, to know these Truths to the bottom.

The Answer to the Sixth LETTER.

SIR,

I Am perfectly well satisfied with your Answer to the Difficulty I proposed in my last, and now see that we suffer ourselves to be surprized by specious Appearances, without considering a Subject on all sides. Your Observations have opened my Eyes, and made me see that what I formerly thought proper for confirming Men in Security, is on the contrary very capable of rousing them effectually: But, still there remains one Difficulty behind, which I intreat you to resolve. Upon the Supposition

position that Hell-Torments shall one day come to an end, this Hell will be no more than a State of Purification, or a sort of *Purgatory*, that borders very close upon what the Church of *Rome* supposes; an Opinion, which our Orthodox Divines have always look'd on as a groundless Fancy, and confuted by strong Arguments, with which you are not unacquainted; and, among others, by these Words: *The Blood of* JESUS CHRIST *cleanseth us from all Sin; there is no Condemnation to them that are in* CHRIST JESUS; *those who die in the Lord, rest from their Labours*; and a great many more to the same purpose. Pray, Sir, answer this Difficulty, and you will oblige him who is, *&c.*

PART II.

LETTER VII.

Wherein the different Sentiments of Protestant *and* Romish *Divines, concerning the State of Souls after Death, are explained.*

SIR,

YOUR second Difficulty will furnish me with an Occasion of examining a Question, which might of itself very well make a separate Article: It is true, as you conclude, That if Hell is one day to have an end, what we

we call by that Name, will be but a State of Purification; whether it endures for a longer or shorter time, and how intense soever its Torments may be. But, this State has no manner of relation to the Purgatory of *Roman Catholics*, who make it a middle State between Heaven and Hell, and think they have as good Reasons to support this their Opinions, as our Divines believe they have to run it down as quite groundless.

I'll assure you, Sir, now we are upon this Topic, that a great many judicious Men, who do not believe the *Restoration*, I here plead for, think thay have good reasons for espousing the Opinion of a *middle State*; widely different indeed from the common notion of *Purgatory*, though in some respects not unlike it. I believe, Sir, you will not be displeased with my making a short Enquiry into that Question; and without regarding what I have advanced in former Letters, I shall now speak, as if I supposed the Eternity of Hell-Torments. I shall begin with the different Sentiments of Divines upon this Subject.

The Protestants only distinguish two contrary States in the Life to come; eternal Happiness and eternal Misery, which they call Hell; this they represent as a State of Blasphemy, Hatred of GOD, Rage and Despair. This, according to them, is the Portion of all those who are not really converted; or, to use their

their own Terms, who have not ſincerely repented.

On the other hand, they are agreed that thoſe in whom this Repentance is found, though in the very loweſt degree, are admitted immediately after Death into perfect Happineſs, in conſideration of the Merits of Chriſt, notwithſtanding their Sanctification is hardly begun. They acknowledge, however, that no unclean thing can ſee the face of GOD; but it is probable, they ſuppoſe that ſuch Souls are as it were metamorphoſed into Holineſs at the moment of their Death: but whether this ſudden change is to be made in the Body or out of the Body, is what they don't pretend to determine.

Whatever becomes of the Queſtion, this is the Opinion of Orthodox Divines concerning Souls after Death. The *Romiſh* Doctors diſtinguiſh three different States in the Life to come. According to them, the Saints of the firſt Rank, who have been purified in this Life by all kinds of Tribulation, and the exerciſe of the ſublimeſt Virtues, are immediately admitted into eternal Bliſs.

The Unregenerate and Impenitent, who have not the leaſt ſincere Degree of Love to GOD, are plunged into Hell for all Eternity; but initiated Chriſtians, nay Chriſtians, whoſe Converſion is ſincere, but whoſe Souls are not yet cleanſed from all manner of Filthineſs, muſt undergo a painful State of Purification,

more or less so, according to their different Degrees of Corruption.

Hell being represented in Scripture under the Emblem of Fire, they conceive this middle State, called *Purgatory*, as a devouring Fire, in nothing different from that of Hell, but as it is of use to purify Souls; whereas the other, say they, is an avenging Fire that constantly devours without consuming *Evil*, and never purifies those who are tormented by it.

To these Circumstances they add some other accidental things, to which the Vulgar give more attention, than to the Essentials themselves; they say *Purgatory* is situated under the Earth; that its Fire is material; that it is seven times hotter than ours: that they can deliver Souls from thence, by procuring a certain number of Masses, doing of Alms, performing Pilgrimages, Vows, *&c.* to their Intention.

It must be acknowledged that this Idea of Purgatory, has been so loaded with fabulous Stories, that the very Name of it is become odious; and the bare Pronunciation of the Word is sufficient for making a Man suspected of Heresy, among all such Protestants as value themselves on being Orthodox. It must be owned, that the Catholick Divines have given too much room for this Horror, by the Abuses they have suffered to creep in on this head. But it were to be wished, that our Divines had separated Truth from Falsehood,

hood, and when they rejected the Abuses and groundless Conclusions deduced from this Principle, they had at the same time retained what is true and simple.

Sir, If you ask me which side I would chuse, I must tell you, that I would not absolutely embrace either, but pick out of each what seems to me founded on Truth. The Examination of this is of importance; I may, perhaps, attempt it in another Letter.

LETTER VIII.

Wherein is considered how we may be informed concerning the State of Souls separated from their Bodies, and what the Scriptures teach us on this head.

SIR,

I Undertook in my last, to enquire what is solid in the different Opinions I then proposed; but as we can distinguish the *False*, only by comparing it with the *True*, I shall begin with an Enquiry into Truth in itself.

First, I shall examine by what means we may be instructed concerning the State of Souls after Death; and then consider what the Scripture has revealed to us on that point.

There are but two ways whereby we can get Information, concerning the State of Souls departed; either by the Sentiment of Conscience, and the Ideas of Justice, which

GOD has ſtamped upon each of us; or by the Revelation which GOD has made in the Holy Scriptures concerning it.

Conſcience ſufficiently convinces every one, that the Soul ſubſiſts after the diſſolution of the Body, and that it is juſt that it ſhould then reap the Fruits of the Good or Evil it has ſown in this Life. The Scriptures every where confirm this inward Teſtimony, and give it a new Degree of Certainty; for GOD alone perfectly knows what paſſes in the World of Spirits.

Theſe two Methods of Inſtruction reciprocally illuſtrate each other: without Revelation the Teſtimony of Conſcience would be too looſe and confuſed; and without the inward Teſtimony, we could not well diſcern the true Senſe of the figurative Expreſſions uſed in Scripture about this matter. It is therefore only by comparing theſe two kinds of Teſtimony, that we can poſſibly know any thing concerning the State of Souls after this Life. Let us now ſee what the Scriptures teach us on this Article.

In the whole Old Teſtament, we find no poſitive Revelation concerning it; we only ſee there, ſome marks of the Hope of the Saints, who were enlightned by a Prophetical Spirit; ſuch were *Job* and *David*; the firſt of whom teſtified it by theſe Words, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*, &c. and the ſecond, by ſome Sentences diffuſed through ſeveral of his *Pſalms*,

Pſalms, which yet are far leſs poſitive than thoſe of *Job*.

In the New Teſtament, we find many formal Declarations concerning the Certainty of the Univerſal Judgment and Reſurrection; Revelation is not in the leaſt ambiguous in theſe two Points. The Caſe is not the ſame in regard to the State of Souls 'till the Reſurrection; ſo that we can judge of it only by Conjectures, or rather by Conſequences drawn from ſome certain Principles.

Let us firſt ſee what the Scriptures teach us moſt literally concerning it. The Parable of the wicked rich Man, informs us, that *Lazarus* was carried by the Angels into *Abraham*'s Boſom, and the wicked rich Man was in Hell. St. *John* ſays, in the *Apocalypſe*, that *thoſe who die in the Lord reſt from their Labours*; and St. *Paul* tells us, *That if the earthly Houſe of our Tabernacle is diſſolved, we have an Houſe eternal in the Heavens.* He aſſures us, that the Faithful chuſe to be abſent from the Body, to be preſent with the Lord; and as to himſelf, that he deſires to be diveſted of his earthly Tabernacle, to be with CHRIST. Here now, if I don't miſtake it, is all that the Scriptures teach us moſt poſitively concerning the State of Souls ſeparated from their Bodies; but after all, every one ſees they are only general Expreſſions, that don't give us any diſtinct Notion of what paſſes immediately after Death; beſides, they are Saints

who here expreſs their Sentiments, which proves nothing as to the reſt of Mankind.

Every body knows, that Parables are not to be ſtretched beyond their principal Deſign, nor to be ſtrictly taken in all their Circumſtances: that therefore of the wicked Miſer, I juſt now mentioned, tends plainly to inform us, that all things in the Life to come ſhall be equally compenſated; that thoſe who are here below in Debaſement and Sufferings, and make a right Improvement of their Afflictions, ſhall in their turn be ſet at reſt, and exalted: whereas, on the contrary, thoſe who have had their good things in this World, and wallow'd in Pleaſures upon Earth, without any concern but that of preſent Enjoyments, ſhall be tormented in the next. And this is the Explication the Parable gives of its ſelf, in the Anſwer of *Abraham* to the wealthy Miſer.

Here I expect to have my Opinion of a middle State oppoſed by our Saviour's Promiſe to the penitent Thief, which, by the by, is mere trifling; for what Connection is there betwixt his Circumſtances and thoſe of all Mankind? And who knows but his Purification might have been finiſhed, as well by his repenting long before his Execution, as by a voluntary Acceptation of his Puniſhment?

In reality, this Inſtance is ſo foreign to the Purpoſe, that it might as well be proved that all Men ſhall be raiſed twice, becauſe the Saints

Saints who arose at our Saviour's Death, must be raised a second time at the final Resurrection.

I conclude therefore, from all that has been said, that since the Scripture only expresses itself parabolically, concerning the State of Souls separated from the Body, and not dogmatically, or by way of positive Declaration, we are not obliged to an implicit Belief in the Decisions of Divines: every one may examine for himself, whether the Scriptures contain some sure and undoubted Principle, from which he may draw Consequences for giving light to the Question: this deserves a more exact Disquisition; if you please, we will reserve it for another Letter.

The Answer to the Seventh and Eighth LETTERS.

SIR,

THE shortness of your two last Letters increases my Impatience to see the Sequel of them. I must own, I was not a little surprized upon reading of your last: for I have all my Life-time believed that the Scriptures taught as a positive Article, that Souls, as soon as they quit their Bodies, immediately appear in the Presence of GOD, there to undergo a particular Judgment; after which, the Souls of the Just are admitted into Bliss, and those of the Wicked plunged into Hell.

But your Letter assures me, that the Scriptures don't explain themselves upon this head. I indeed at first looked upon your Assertion to be false, and have been at some pains in searching the Scriptures for some explicit Testimonies on my side; but all to no purpose.

In short, being resolved to know the source of those Notions, which I had as firmly believed, as I now do the Existence of a GOD; I found I had learn'd them first in my Catechism, when a Child, and had been confirmed in them by reading some Controversial Writings, which all unanimously maintain the same Opinion, as an unquestionable Truth. So venerable was their common Suffrage with me, that I can assure you, I dar'd never venture to take the liberty of doubting of it.

I am now convinced of the force of the Prejudices of Childhood; and shall be more upon my guard for the future, against whatever may be derived from that Principle.

LETTER IX.

Wherein certain Principles are examin'd; and from which Conclusions follow, that may illustrate the Question.

SIR,

IN order to come to the Examination I hinted to you in my last, I shall begin with some general Reflections, on the Nature of

of *Fundamental Principles*, as being the *Basis* of particular Truths.

And here, I beg you wou'd consider, that the *Principles* of things include in them all the *Consequences*; when a Principle is once well established, all the Conclusions flowing from it are so too.

The Sacred Authors have written with freedom, and without confining themselves to the Rules of Art; sometimes they draw Inferences from their own Principles; at others they lay down Principles, and leave it to the Reader's Industry, to deduce Conclusions from them.

Some Principles are more certain and indisputable than others; the formal and positive Decisions of Scripture, may be look'd upon as so many Principles; but such Decisions are not equally inconteſtable: Why so? Because we may be ignorant of their true Meaning.

Here I resume the distinction I made in my first Letter, betwixt *Eternal Unalterable Truths*, that are built upon the Nature of GOD and his Perfections, and *accessory* or *particular Truths*, which we know only by Scripture-Testimony.

I say, that Principles supported by the first of these Truths, are the most indisputable; is it because things revealed by GOD are not equally certain? Not so, they are equally cer-

tain with respect to him; but we may be mistaken in the Sense we give them.

The unchangeable Truths, are these in which we are in no danger of being deceived, as being always the same, after what manner soever the Scripture may express them; their Reality depends not on the Letter, which may admit of different Interpretations; even though the Letter itself was lost, they would not be less certain. We may say, *They are not become True by Revelation; but were revealed to us because they are True.*

It is now time to examine those Truths, so far as they may be of service to our Subject.

And first, I begin with GOD's design in forming Creatures after his own Image. He intended they should be *Holy* and *Happy*, by sharing of his Sanctity and Felicity; as soon as they fell from that blessed State, he omitted nothing that might restore them; this is the only End of all his Conduct towards Man from *Adam* to this day; the Law and the Gospel are only various means for bringing Men to Holiness; if GOD blesses us with all spiritual Blessings, it is, *that we may be Holy and Unblameable before him in Charity.*

This is an undoubted Principle, nor can it be shaken by alledging that GOD could have no other End in view than his own Glory; that he created us for his Glory, and sanctifies us for the same purpose. I allow all this; but was this done to acquire a Degree of

Glory

Glory he had not before, or to add any thing to his own? The Thought would be abſurd, becauſe nothing can be added to what is Infinite. All that can be ſaid is, that GOD's Glory is diſplayed when he does good to his Creatures, and particularly when he forms them after the Image of his own Holineſs. But, the manifeſtation of this Glory redounds to our Benefit, not to his.

It will therefore be eternally true, that all the Ways of GOD towards Men, tend only to their Sanctification.

But ſecondly, why does GOD do ſo much for the Sanctification of Men? Pure Charity is his only Motive, becauſe they cannot be united to him without being holy, and without this Union, it is impoſſible they ſhould be happy; *Holineſs* and *Happineſs* being inſeparable. Here now is another Principle, that deſerves our Conſideration; I ſhall explain myſelf.

Holineſs is not an arbitrary Condition that GOD has impoſed on Men, in order to give them the Enjoyment of heavenly Bliſs, as if he might indifferently have laid upon them any other. It is an eſſential Condition neceſſary to Happineſs; as a right Diſpoſition of all the Members is requiſite to the Health of the Body. It was therefore well ſaid, *That the Health of the Soul is nothing but Holineſs.* Upon this Principle the *Engliſh* Divines have

maintained, that even a Manſion in Paradiſe could not make an unſanctified Soul happy.

From this Principle a third follows; that the Promiſes and Menaces made by GOD to Men, are not, properly ſpeaking, a formed Deſign of rewarding, or puniſhing them according as they ſhall, or ſhall not comply with the Conditions required. No; it is a bare Declaration of what will happen to every one, by the very nature of things, according to the choice he ſhall make; as if a Huſbandman when ſowing his Field was told, that as he ſowed good or bad Grain, he ſhall reap either the one or the other. On this Principle, St. *Paul*, *Galat.* ch. 5. makes that remarkable Declaration; *Be not deceived*, (ſays he) *GOD is not mocked*; *for what a Man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap.*

From this Principle, we may draw an Inference, on which I touched in my firſt Letters; that, properly ſpeaking, GOD does not inflict Sufferings on Men, but leaves them to reap the Fruits of what they have ſown. GOD never avenges himſelf; he is neither wrathful nor furious, as commonly repreſented; being pure Goodneſs and the Source of all Happineſs, he can give only what he himſelf poſſeſſeth; and although the Scriptures make uſe of ambiguous Expreſſions, that ſeem to ſuppoſe he avengeth himſelf, is provoked, and inflicts ſevere Puniſhments on his Creatures; in theſe and the like Caſes, we are

to

to make use of the unalterable Ideas, we have of his Nature and Perfections, and give them the preference to the Letter.

These Principles being laid down, which no Man of Sense will dispute, I shall, with their assistance, examine the different Opinions of Divines, beginning with those of the Church of *Rome*.

The distinction they make of a middle State, between Eternal Happiness and Eternal Damnation, is not entirely groundless; it is supported by our second Principle, *viz. That without perfect Holiness a Soul cannot be re-united to GOD*, and consequently be *compleatly happy*. Now, as but very few arrive to Purity of Heart in this Life, they suppose that those whose Sanctification is begun, but interrupted by Death, will not for that reason be excluded from Happiness, but that the Enjoyment of it shall be deferr'd, till they are cleansed from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit. This is what seems most probable in the Doctrine of the *Roman Catholics* upon this head; but it must be owned, there are very few, if any of that Communion, whose Ideas are so refined on this Article; they look upon this middle State, called *Purgatory*, as a Payment made by Men to divine Justice, by a certain Measure of Sufferings undergone, 'till it is satisfied. This, is the commonly received Notion of Purgatory among them;

the

the Vulgar add abundance of other Abſurdities, too well known to be here repeated.

Let us now come to the Proteſtant Divines. It is not without ſome reaſon that they reject theſe Suppoſitions: In Reality, this is to ſuppoſe that the Juſtice of GOD exacts of Men ſatisfaction to its demands by their Sufferings; that it is ſuſceptible of Wrath, and can be appeaſed only by Torments; that actual Sins, which they pretend are expiated hereby, are all the Evil with which the Soul is infected. This is confounding the Acts of Corruption, with Corruption itſelf.

The Proteſtant Divines therefore have reaſon to reject the Idea of ſuch a *Purgatory*, but they have not ſo much reaſon on their ſide, when they poſitively determine; *That there is no Medium between Eternal Happineſs and Eternal Damnation.* This deſerves ſome farther Reflection.

To diſtinguiſh in the Life to come, only two Claſſes at an infinite diſtance from each other, ſuch as thoſe of Heaven and Hell, is to ſuppoſe that all be ranked only in two Claſſes, in regard to their Diſpoſitions; that they are all, without exception, either in the higheſt pitch of *Holineſs*, or the greateſt height of *Depravity:* (for it is an invariable Rule of Juſtice, that every one ſhould be happy or miſerable, according to his good or bad Diſpoſitions, and this in an exact Proportion.) But this Suppoſition is ſo viſibly falſe, that it does

does not deserve to be confuted. Every reasonable Person will own, that from the most *Wicked* to the most *Holy*, there are infinite Degrees. May it not be said, that there are, perhaps, as many different Degrees as there are different Creatures?

Hence it follows, that between the two Extremes, there will be an infinite Number who will be found more or less Good, and more or less Wicked, with such diversity as is beyond description. In some, *Good* will prevail over *Evil*; in others, *Evil* over *Good*; in several, *Good* and *Evil* will be confounded, or as it were equally ballanced; and the different advantageous or disadvantageous Circumstances, each Person shall be in, will infinitely diversify the Degree of *Good* or *Evil*.

I now return to our second Principle, and say, that if it is true, *That the measure of Holiness constitutes the measure of Bliss*; the Persons therefore, of whom I have just now been speaking, being neither perfectly Holy, nor compleatly Wicked, will, for this very reason, neither be absolutely happy, nor desperately miserable.

Upon this Principle, those in whom *Good* shall prevail over *Evil*, will be more happy than miserable; and those in whom *Evil* shall have the ascendant, will have a larger share of Misery than Happiness; and those, in whom *Good* and *Evil* are equally poised, must sustain

ſuſtain terrible Combats, 'till *Good* has got the better of its Adverſary.

Upon this foot, the three Claſſes juſt now mentioned, although different from one another, will however conſtitute a Medium between the greateſt Happineſs and moſt exquiſite Miſery; which is all that is intended by the *middle State* now under conſideration.

The Conſequence is ſo natural, and ſo evidently reſults from the very Principles of the Orthodox, that I am at a loſs how they can elude the force of it; for by their own Confeſſion, no Man can ſee the Lord without Sanctification; and, as is further acknowledged, there is ſcarce a Perſon to be found, whoſe Sanctification is finiſhed in this Life, it follows, that it muſt be compleated in the Life to come.

But here, perhaps, they may think to retort the Argument, by ſuppoſing Sanctification being begun, though in the loweſt degree, is finiſhed in an Inſtant by a kind of Metamorphoſis, when the Soul is ſeparated from the Body.

I'd fain aſk theſe Gentlemen, how they came by this Idea; whether they take it from ſome *Deciſions* of *Scripture*, from the Sentiments of Conſcience, or from their own Experience.

It would be ſuperfluous to prove that Experience cannot be admitted in the preſent Caſe. I acknowledge, I ſhould be ſurprized

to

to see a decision of this sort in Scripture. As to Conscience, it is so far from having the least Inclination to espouse this Opinion, that it constantly declares against it; and in spite of the violent Propensity every Man has to what flatters him, in spite of all the Authorities alledged to persuade him of its Reality, Conscience tacitly gives the lye to those deceitful Assurances, especially when any imminent danger threatens approaching Death.

Let us therefore agree, that this Opinion of a Metamorphosis or sudden Transformation, is harder to be proved than supposed.

But, says some Divine of a different Opinion, "I do not suppose this pretended "Change, and maintain it is not necessary; be- "cause GOD does not look upon an imper- "fect Soul in its self, but in his own well- "beloved Son; he covers all its Spots with "the Robe of his Righteousness. And "though it is very far from being holy, he "regards it as such by the Imputation of "Christ's Merits."

This I must own is a very short way. But the Question is, whether this System be founded on the *True*, or not; the Scripture-Phrases that seem to support it, are too ambiguous to be allowed as Proofs; they prove too much, and therefore prove nothing.

If they prove that the Merits of JESUS CHRIST, and the Imputation of his Justice excuse Men from sanctifying themselves, be-

cause

cauſe GOD conſiders them not in themſelves, they prove too much. On that foot, our firſt Principle wou'd be falſe, *That all the ways of GOD toward Men tend only to ſanctify them.* If it be allowed that they prove nothing like this, the neceſſity of Sanctification remains untouched, and conſequently nothing is proved.

Let us go one ſtep farther: Were it poſſible for a Soul, full of bad Inclinations, to be ſaved, without any real Change wrought in it, it would be ſaved without being holy; it would indeed be reputed holy by Imputation, but would not be really ſo. What would follow from this? Two manifeſt Abſurdities.

Firſt, That we might be numbred among the *Bleſſed*, though we were never in the liſt of Saints; and then our ſecond Principle would be falſe, *viz. That Holineſs and Happineſs are inſeparable.*

Secondly, That Paradiſe, which ought to be the Manſion of Truth and Reality, would be only the abode of Appearance and Illuſion; GOD would no longer judge of things as they really are; he would not repute a Man *juſt*, who is really *unjuſt*; and *Spiritual*, who is really *Carnal*; and the Contradiction would be ſolved by this ingenious mental Reſervation, "That JESUS CHRIST the Righ-
"teous imputes unto them his Righteouſneſs,
"and that GOD does not look upon them as
"they are in themſelves."

Does

Does GOD deal in bare Words and Subterfuges? and is it not more true to say, that he doth not hold the Guilty innocent?

But I have already said more than was necessary for confuting an Opinion so ill grounded. I should think I called your Judgment in question, should I say any more upon the Subject; allow me to leave the rest to your own Reflection.

An Answer to the Ninth LETTER.

SIR,

YOUR last has opened my Eyes to Truths I had never before considered; I had till now thought, that in order to maintain the Opinion of a middle State, we ought to have recourse to groundless Hypotheses; but I now find that, on the contrary, those who deny it, are reduced to Suppositions without Proof. Such are that of a sudden change at the hour of Death, and that of an Imputation of Righteousness, which dispenses with actual Sanctification. The last mentioned, is not only void of Proof, but the bare mention of it is sufficient for shewing its falshood. It is surprizing that we grow old in our Attachment to Opinions never thoroughly examined, and the Consequences of which are not so much as perceived.

I now comprehend, that whatever Method we take, it is very difficult to elude the Opinion

nion of Purification; whether we ſuppoſe the Eternity of Hell-Torments, or that they are to have an end: if the latter, this Hell will itſelf be only a State of Purification for Souls; if, on the other hand, we ſtick to the Opinion of the Orthodox concerning the endleſs duration of Hell-Torments, there is ſtill greater reaſon to eſpouſe a middle State; for without that, they muſt ſuppoſe the eternal Deſtruction of an infinite number of Creatures, who have not been able to complete their Sanctification in this Life, though they had entered on it.

I ſhall not therefore, Sir, aſk any more Proofs of the Opinion delivered in your former Letters; the Principles you have laid down, have prevented all the Objections I might have made. I perceive, that if I advance the grand Argument of the Orthodox againſt you, *viz. That the Blood of* JESUS CHRIST *cleanſeth us from all Sin:* You have anſwered it, by your firſt and ſecond Principles.

The firſt is, *That all the ways of GOD towards Men, tend only to make them holy*; therefore the Blood of our Saviour was not ſhed to diſpenſe with Sanctification; but to lead us to it.

The ſecond, *That Holineſs and Happineſs are inſeparable*; if ſo, it follows, that the Blood of JESUS CHRIST ought to cleanſe us really, and not by a bare Imputation, ſince without

without real Holineſs we can never be really happy.

Thus, Sir, I apply your Principles to the Objections that may be offered againſt your Doctrine; I don't know whether I enter rightly into your way of thinking.

Permit me to propoſe two other Difficulties. *Firſt*, If Hell is only a State of Purification, then, properly ſpeaking, there will be no Hell at all.

Secondly, Upon your Hypotheſis, the Souls of the Wicked would be placed with thoſe of the Juſt; and what Fellowſhip hath Unrighteouſneſs with Righteouſneſs? Can it be imagined that the ſincerely Pious, though not abſolutely holy, will be ranked with the vileſt Sinners, hardened in all manner of Vice?

Pray, Sir, be ſo good as to clear up theſe Difficulties, *&c.*

LETTER X.

A more accurate Enquiry, in what Senſe it is true, That the Blood of JESUS CHRIST *cleanſeth us from all Sin.*

SIR,

I Think you make a very juſt Application of the Principles we have laid down, to the Objections uſually made to the Doctrine of Purification. The Paſſage of St. *John*, which you ſay may be urged againſt this Opinion, would

would be more proper for eſtabliſhing it, whether it be conſidered in itſelf, or as it ſtands connected with the preceding and following Words: *The Blood of* CHRIST *cleanſeth us from all Sin.* When we ſay *cleanſeth*, we do not barely ſay *abſolves*, *diſcharges* from Puniſhment, much leſs *diſpenſes* with Purification from Sin. This would be an evident Contradiction, and would make St. *John* aſſert that the Blood of Chriſt cleanſeth us, without cleanſing us; juſt as if we ſhould ſay of an able Phyſician, that he cures all kinds of Diſeaſes by a Certificate of Health, though he cured none. Should we be ſatisfied to be cured after this manner?

Let us now determine what is meant by *the Blood of* JESUS CHRIST; it cannot be underſtood of his material Blood; it is, they will ſay, the Merit of his Blood or Death. Agreed: but what has he merited for us by it? Is it an Exemption from Sanctity, or the Spirit of Sanctification? If the latter, its Operations muſt really produce Holineſs in our Souls; but cleanſing and ſanctifying are one and the ſame thing.

Might we not, to avoid all ambiguity, underſtand the Words thus; *The Spirit, which* JESUS CHRIST *has merited for us by his Blood, purifieth us from all Sin*; that this is the true meaning of them, will be the more evident, if we conſider the preceding Verſe, and

and the general Design of the whole Chapter, 1 *Epist.* St. *John* i.

The Apostle here lays down a Principle, from which he himself draws the Consequence: The Principle is this; *GOD is Light, and in him is no Darkness:* then follows the Consequence, first negatively expressed; *If we say, we have Communion with him, and walk in Darkness, we are Lyars:* and then positively in these Words; *But if we walk in the Light, as he is in the Light, we have Communion one with another, and the Blood of* JESUS CHRIST *cleanseth us from all Sin.* This Purification therefore, doth not dispense with our walking in the Light, since by that we are brought to it, and become the Children of Light.

It is needless here to determine the Sense of the Terms *Light* and *Darkness*; we easily conceive that since GOD is called *Light*, the Word in this place can only signify Purity or Sanctity in itself, to which *Darkness* being opposed, must signify Impurity or Corruption.

There is another Verse of the same Chapter, that farther confirms what we have advanced; that our Purification must be real or inherent: *If we confess our Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and cleanse us from all Unrighteousness.* Let us weigh a little the meaning of these Words, which contain a Condition and a double Promise; the Condition is, that we *confess our Sins*, which supposes us acquainted with them, that we detest

deteſt, and ſtrive againſt them; without which, the Confeſſion would not be ſincere; the Promiſe includes Pardon and Purification.

First, *He is faithful to pardon our Sins.* But how does he pardon them? he pardons the Acts of them to thoſe whoſe Diſpoſitions are ſuch as we have mentioned, by not interrupting the courſe of his ſanctifying Graces towards them; we may likewiſe add, that he pardons them by taking away the Eternity of Puniſhments, and that GOD grants this favour at the Interceſſion of his Son.

Secondly, *He is juſt, to cleanſe us from all Unrighteouſneſs.* The Purification, here diſtinguiſhed from Pardon, muſt be of a different nature. Why is this Operation here aſcribed to Juſtice? Becauſe Juſtice cannot ſuffer Injuſtice to ſubſiſt, without oppoſing it, 'till it is utterly deſtroyed.

But, it may be aſked, what is wanting toward the Salvation of him, whoſe Sins God has pardoned?

This is what very few underſtand; they make not a ſufficient difference between the *Acts*, and the *Source* from which thoſe flow; between the Effects of Corruption, and Corruption itſelf. Let us ſuppoſe, that though the *Acts* are pardoned, the Subſtance of Evil is not thereby rooted up. Lop the Branches of a Tree without deſtroying it to the Root, your Work will always be to begin again; as long

long as the Root continues alive, it will conſtantly produce freſh Branches.

An inordinate Self-Love is the Root that produces in us all wicked Acts; but thoſe Acts being pardoned, the Root ſtill ſubſiſts; and as long as it doth ſo, we ſhall remain Unrighteous, and incapable of holding Communion with GOD.

We ſee then, it is not enough to obtain the pardon of the wicked Acts we have committed, if we are not alſo thoroughly cleanſed from all Iniquity.

Though this digreſſion, Sir, is ſuperfluous to you, who go to the bottom of things, I cannot forbear allowing one moment's Attention to two Verſes of the ſame Epiſtle, that contain the Summary of all I have now ſaid, 1 St. *John* iii. 2, 3. *We know when the Son of GOD ſhall appear we ſhall be like him, and ſhall ſee him as he is; therefore every one that hath this hope, purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure.*

We cannot ſee GOD as he is, without being like him. It is impoſſible to be like him without being purified, not only from Acts of Injuſtice, but alſo from the whole Source of Wickedneſs; which is, as it were, incorporated with, and naturalized in us.

Therefore, ſuch as in this Life have only touched on, or begun this great Work, muſt certainly continue it in the next, till they be-

come like JESUS CHRIST; otherwiſe they cannot ſee him as he is.

I doubt, Sir, whether after ſo many ſtrong Proofs, any more Objections can well be ſtarted againſt the Opinion in queſtion; I ſhould be ready to hear them, though I ſhould be much miſtaken, if the Principles which we have laid down, will not furniſh us with Solutions or Anſwers to all that can be advanced againſt it.

If it be objected, as I have heard ſome Perſons do, that GOD is too good to inflict ſuch Puniſhment upon his Children, as are ſuppoſed in a State of Purification; that in ſhort, there is no Condemnation of thoſe who are in CHRIST JESUS: our firſt Principle affords a Solution to the difficulty; *viz. That GOD, properly ſpeaking, does not puniſh Men, but leaves them to reap the Fruits of what they have ſown.*

Upon this Principle it muſt be obſerved, that the Souls which, after this Life, ſuffer Torment proportioned to the *Evil* which is in them, do not paſs into that State of ſuffering by a Sentence, poſitively pronounced by GOD. GOD has no Torment to inflict on his Creatures; and though, in compliance with the uſual way of ſpeaking, it has been ſaid in one of my firſt Letters, that Divine Juſtice obſerves an exact proportion between the Rewards it beſtows, and the Puniſhments it inflicts, it is not therefore to be ſo underſtood,

ſtood, as if GOD made his Creatures ſuffer, or inflicted Torments on them.

Whence then can they proceed? I have already ſaid it more than once, and it cannot be repeated too often; from themſelves. To which I add, that they have let themſelves grow worſe and worſe for want of proper Care, by ſowing their Field with bad Seed, which has proved a Poiſon to them.

But to ſpeak without a figure; What is *ſowing to the Fleſh?* It is the gratifying our Inclinations, and thereby fortifying, and rivetting thoſe ill Habits, which at laſt tyrannize over us.

What is the meaning of *reaping Corruption from the Fleſh?* It is experiencing the Torment reſulting from that Tyranny, being deprived of the Objects, which we could not part with, feeling cutting Remorſe, for having voluntarily attached ourſelves to them.

Here I might make ſome Remarks on the Nature of Habits, and the Power they have over thoſe, who have ſuffered them to grow inveterate; but perhaps, I may have occaſion to do this, when I come to anſwer your laſt Difficulties. Allow me, Sir, to reſerve this for another Letter.

LETTER XI.

Wherein these two Objections are answered; First, *That if Hell is only a State of Purification, strictly speaking, there will be no Hell.* Secondly, *That this is placing the Souls of the Righteous with those of the Wicked.*

SIR,

I Was very sensible that you proposed your last difficulties, rather to give me an opportunity of returning an Answer to them, than to communicate any farther Light to yourself.

But before I come to the Particulars concerning the Bottom of the question, it may be proper to settle the signification of the word *Hell*; for it is capable of different Senses.

By *Hell* is frequently meant a State of Punishment, Torment, Remorse, and Anguish. Sometimes the Word is used in Scripture to signify the *Grave*; and, if our Divines had not in several places translated it in this last Sense, we should have found the word *Hell* much oftner in Scripture, and applied to Subjects which cannot relate to the Reprobate; as might be shewn in many instances.

However, as Words receive their Signification only from the Ideas annexed to them, to avoid all ambiguity, and keep to the most common

common Acceptation of them, we shall understand by the word *Hell*, a State of Torment, Remorse and gnawing Worms, *&c.* which is the Portion of the Reprobate. By the *Reprobate* I here mean, not Persons predestinated to Damnation, as several imagine; but such as have employed their Liberty, only in resisting the Truth, by stifling the Reproofs of Conscience, till they have at last scarce heard its Language.

I now return to your Question, and say, that though Hell is supposed to be but of finite Duration, it is not therefore less Hell; if it may in some sense be called a State of Purification, it is only such in regard to its Design and Use; as it will end at last, and restore Souls to an Union with GOD, after it has entirely consumed in them all Iniquity. But in regard to the Pains and Torments proper to it, we may justly call it *Hell*, and take the word in the whole Extent of the Ideas given us of that State in Scripture.

In all these respects, we may consider it as a State of *weeping and gnashing of Teeth*; a State of *Privation* and *Darkness*; a State of positive Torments, faintly represented under the Notion of a *Lake of Brimstone*; a State of *devouring Hunger* and *Thirst*, in opposition to the Pleasures which Men have tasted in this World; a State of Shame and mortifying Confusion, in opposition to Vain-Glory and Love of Praise; a State of Remorse and in-

teriour Anguish, occasion'd by a quick Sense of our being the only Authors of all the Woes we endure; and this in opposition to Security and false Confidence.

In short, we may even look on it as an *Eternal Fire*, or an Eternity of Torments, in respect to what the Damned will certainly feel; for there is good reason to believe, that, since the Scripture represents the Duration of their Torment, as an Eternity, it will appear so to them, not only by the Number of Years and Ages it shall swallow up, but likewise because the least part of Time will seem to them an Eternity.

When therefore we suppose Hell-Torments will one day end, we don't depart from the Ideas which both holy Scripture and good Sense give us of it. When speaking of the Eternity of Hell, we may even make use of the very Terms in which it is described, such as an *Eternal Fire*, a *Worm that never dieth*; and it is but too probable, as I just now observed, that the Sufferers of those dreadful Torments will reckon every Hour an Age, and every Age an Eternity.

I come now to your second Difficulty, which is, That by my Hypothesis, the Souls of the *Just* and the *Reprobates* are placed together! By no means; for in the Sense which we have given to the word *Hell*, it will not be the Portion of the Righteous, but only of the Wicked.

But,

But, say you, what Place will you then assign to the Righteous? I own, were it my business here to determine their Situation or Place of Abode, I should be put to a nonplus; for we have no Ideas of the manner of the Existence of Spirits, nor of the Place they occupy; the most general Opinion is, that they don't occupy Place, but this I do not pretend to determine.

I shall only observe, that when we speak of Place, in order to denote the Happiness or Misery of Spirits separated from Bodies, we can only form such Ideas of it, as are widely different from Truth: for if they are Spirits, external Objects can make no impression on them, and therefore, their Happiness or Misery doth not depend on the Place they occupy, even though they were supposed capable of occupying it, but solely on their good or bad Disposition; which is exactly the Scheme of the *English* Divines, mentioned in one of my former Letters; to avoid Impropriety of Speech, we ought to substitute the Term *State* or *Situation*, instead of that of *Place*.

On this foot, we need be at no great pains to assign the Righteous their Portion; I speak of those righteous Persons, whose Sanctification is not finished; and we shall without scruple assert, that they will be *happy or miserable, in proportion to the good or bad State of their inner Man.*

This Consequence flows from our second Principle, *That the measure of Holiness, is the measure of Happiness*; and you may remember, Sir, the Remarks I made on it in my Ninth Letter, that those in whom *Good shall be found to have the ascendant over Evil*, will for that reason be *more Happy than Miserable*, &c. I shall not here repeat what I have already said on that Subject.

I shall only observe, that we may, without falling into Mistake, call that a *middle State*, which is a sort of *Medium* between *perfect Happiness* and what we have call'd *Hell*; and this *middle State* will be the Portion of Souls moderately virtuous, in whom Righteousness has not yet destroyed all Unrighteousness. However, tho' we speak of this as a *State* in the singular Number, we do not thereby exclude a great diversity of States, or different Degrees, according to the degree of Righteousness or Unrighteousness that shall be found in each Soul.

Sir, I don't know whether I have sufficiently answered your last Difficulties; but if you have any more to propose, I'll gladly answer them as well as I can. *I am*, &c.

The Answer to the Eleventh LETTER.

SIR,

IF I durst venture to beg of you some farther Illustration of the Subject, it should not

not be concerning the Truth or Reality of this State of Purification, of which I am fully satisfied; but on the Manner and Nature of the Pains the Soul must there undergo. This, perhaps, may be a piece of Indiscretion; but I hope I shall have no more fresh Difficulties to trouble you with, after this Question is answered.

LETTER XII.

Wherein is enquired what the Nature of the Pains of the State of Purification may probably be; and whether the Habits we have contracted in this Life, will subsist in the next.

SIR,

IT is no easy Task you have laid upon me in your last Letter. When we undertake to determine too nicely, in things of which we have no Certainty, either from Experience or positive Revelation, we run the hazard of falling into Mistakes.

The Question you have proposed is of this sort; for Experience gives us no Information of the matter, except it be by Reflection on what passes in this Life: Conscience and Revelation do indeed discover the Principles of it; but as to the full detail of Circumstances, we are left entirely in the dark, and can never speak of it with too much caution; we can

only propose Conjectures; and on that foot I shall speak of it.

First, then, We may suppose that the Soul at its departure from the Body, hath a strong Sense of the *Impressions* of *Truth*; the same *Truth*, which is a pleasant Light to pure Souls, is, on the contrary, exceeding painful to those, who are yet in a State of Imperfection; it is even so intolerable to the *Reprobate*, that they would rather be crushed by the fall of *Rocks* and *Mountains*, as it is expressed in the *Apocalypse*, than be exposed to the shocking Impression which that Light makes on them.

But how is it possible, that the same Light should be pleasant to some, and intolerable to others? Because it shews every one the true state of things, and particularly the situation of his Inner Man.

To some it discovers the Harmony which subsists between the Divine Attributes, and the Dispositions of their own Souls, the Conformity between the *Copy* and the *Original*; in a word, it lets them see they have no Inclination or Propensity left, but that of being re-united to their Center? What can be more delightful than such a discovery?

To others, it discovers a Disproportion and extreme Opposition, between the Perfections of GOD, and their own inward Dispositions; Inclinations prone to things sensible, deep-rooted Habits which strongly oppose the flight of the Soul toward Sovereign Goodness, a

Stock

Stock of Self-Love so inveterate, that they see it in spite of themselves, as the Center in which all their Desires are united. What can be more mortifying than a discovery of this nature?

Let us now come to something more particular; I would have you observe by the way, that I do not here repeat the distinction of different degrees; because I have already spoke of it several times: It will be proper to suppose it wherever it shall be necessary.

The Effects of this penetrating Light, must produce most lively and painful Sentiments, which are the necessary Consequences of those already mentioned.

First, The Privation of the Objects to which we have been so much attached, must needs be very bitter.

Secondly, The full, entire, and uninterrupted View of ourselves, whereby we see a World of Iniquity, which we had never known till that Moment.

Thirdly, A distinct Knowledge of the true or real Worth of things, by which we shall see the folly of having preferr'd the *visible* to the *invisible*.

Fourthly, A most exact remembrance of the whole course of our past Lives; of the Graces we have received, and the small use we have made of them; of the loss of time, of which we till then knew not the Value; in a word, of the secret resistance made to the

Reproofs of *Truth*, which we have induſtriouſly avoided to hear, in order to procure ourſelves a falſe Repoſe.

Fifthly, The Grief we feel on ſeeing ourſelves faſt bound by Habits contrary to Sanctity; the Conviction we ſhall then have, that we ourſelves are the Authors of them, and that they are come to ſuch a height, only by repeated voluntary Acts, which we would not forſake.

Sixthly, The Violence we muſt do ourſelves, before we can produce Acts entirely contrary to thoſe Habits; for every one knows that a Habit can be deſtroyed only by contrary Acts, more frequent and vigorous than thoſe which form'd it. We do with pleaſure, things in themſelves moſt difficult, when we have once acquired a Habit. But what is pleaſant to ſome, would become painful to others, who have contracted contrary Habits.

Let us ſuppoſe two Perſons; one a *Tumbler* or *Rope-dancer*, accuſtomed from his Youth to bodily Exerciſe, and paſſionately fond only of ſuch Exerciſes. The other a *Philoſopher*, involved in profound Meditation, and accuſtomed from his Youth, to paſs whole Days and Nights in his Study, without being ever ſatiated with Reading and Knowledge. Endeavour to make them exchange Profeſſions: Put the *Tumbler* in the *Philoſopher*'s place, bid him divert himſelf with the *Folio's:* order him to meditate three fourths of every Day, remove

remove from his View all Objects that may distract his Thoughts. On the other hand, put the *Philosopher* in the *Tumbler*'s place, make him ramble up and down the Country, dance upon the Rope, and play a thousand Harlequin Tricks upon a Stage.

Then ask each of them how he likes his new State. They will both tell you they are on the Rack, that this kind of Life is insupportable to them. The *Philosopher* will envy the Condition of the *Tumbler*, and the *Tumbler* that of the *Philosopher*; neither of them will be able to imagine, that the other can be miserable in a Profession, in which he himself took so much delight.

Almost every one finds by daily Experience, that what appears to him difficult, is so in regard to him, only because he is not accustomed to it, or because he has contracted contrary Habits.

But it may be asked, how Habits contracted in this Life can be preserved in the next? External Actions will not take place there. External Exercises will indeed be quite abolished in that State; but, as those outward Acts, which we here produce, are only the Effects of our Wills, which command all our Limbs, the Dissolution of the Limbs can never annihilate the Cause that put them into Action; that is as vigorous as ever, although it be deprived of Instruments to execute its Orders. A Person passionately fond of Gaming, if you pluck

pluck out his Eyes, and tye his Hands, cannot in that ſtate gratify his Paſſion; but that Paſſion would not be leſs violent; perhaps it would even receive double Strength from the Obſtacles in his way.

Habits therefore reſide in the Soul, that *wills*, and commands; not in the Body, that *obeys*. True it is, that in this Life the irregular Motions of the Body or Conſtitution, may contribute to excite various Paſſions; but the *Will* can ſuffer only by its own free *Conſent*, which it may either give or refuſe.

It is by this Conſent that the Paſſions, which at firſt were only in the *Conſtitution*, inſinuate themſelves into the *Will*, and render it equally diſordered with themſelves. Thus the Rebellions of the Conſtitution become Acts of the Will, the Repetition of which ſoon grows into a Habit, as voluntary as the Acts themſelves were.

The Soul, when it leaves the Body, does not carry its Conſtitution with it; but it is certain that it carries its own *Will*, and the Habits that depend upon it.

But ſtill it will be objected, May not the ſame thing befall a Soul in its ſeparate State, that happens to ſeveral Perſons in this Life, who being for a time paſſionately fond of certain Pleaſures, inſenſibly loſe all Reliſh for them, without committing any Violence on themſelves? If we obſerve, we ſhall find that it is not the Love of Pleaſure which ſuch Perſons

ſons loſe, but the pleaſure they took in this or that Object. A new Object affords them greater delight, for which reaſon they quit the firſt. They are ſo far from loſing the Love of Pleaſure, when they are diſguſted at one particular Object, that they are determined in their Choice by the ſame Love of Pleaſure.

Here I except thoſe Perſons in whom Converſion and the Love of GOD gradually ſurmount their worldly Inclinations; but we may be aſſured, that this will not be done without Violence; our Saviour undoubtedly knew what trouble it would coſt a Man, when he compares the Pain it would give, to the pulling out of an Eye, *&c.*

Hence we may conclude, that all Paſſions and Habits that ſeem to ſlacken or be deſtroyed, without ſome Struggle on our part, have only ſubſtituted another Object in the place of a former; it is a Child who does not cry when you take his Play-thing from him, becauſe you give him another which he likes better. Nothing is more common than the Reality of this Inſtance; and it is to no purpoſe for a Man to be diſpleaſed with himſelf upon the eaſineſs he finds in diſengaging himſelf from certain Objects. The Diſguſt they inſpire, is the ſole Cauſe of it; he parts with them only to make himſelf amends elſewhere.

But in the next Life there will be no ſuch thing; the Soul will there find none of its favourite Objects or Amuſements; it will ſee itſelf

itſelf *alone*; and that View will be more terrible than we can at preſent imagine.

The ſight of ourſelves is one of the moſt inſupportable Torments in this World. A Man can bear the weight of the moſt painful Labours, who would not be able to endure the conſtant View of himſelf one whole Day. And yet this View of ourſelves is ſo confuſed, ſo tranſient, and we ſee ſo many other things with ourſelves, that we never ſee ourſelves as we really are.

When the Soul ſhall be ſeparated from all things, we ſhall ſee ourſelves in a very different manner; when there ſhall be no more Intervals, either for Sleep or the other Neceſſities of Life, or for converſing with other Men, (Intervals which give great relief to thoſe who cannot endure Self-inſpection) when we ſhall be no longer able to cover the *bottom* of our Intentions with ſpecious Pretexts, when we ſhall be forced to open our Ears to the Rebukes of Conſcience, and the Truth will ſpeak ſo loud, that we can no longer evade it. That *Truth* which we obſtinately refuſe to liſten to in this Life, will then be in its *Kingdom*, we muſt hear it, how mortifying ſoever its Leſſons may prove.

There the Learned will find the Uſeleſſneſs of moſt of their Studies, that have not led them to the knowledge of the Supreme Good; there they will look upon the Subjects of their grand Diſputes, as ſo many mere Nothings.

There

There the Divines themſelves, who imagined they preached the pureſt Doctrine, who with a well-meant Zeal have oppoſed the Truth, whilſt they intended to oppoſe Error, will be no leſs ſurprized than afflicted at the ſight of their paſt Obſtinacy and Prejudices. The Impreſſion which their Deciſions may probably have made on others, will prove no ſmall pain to them; and who knows but the Books they wrote in that Spirit, may aggravate their Affliction?

There thoſe who ſought their own Glory, and the Applauſe of their Auditors, will be covered with Confuſion; their Learning and Eloquence will paſs current no longer. If they have the leaſt grain of true Zeal for the Advancement of Piety, that alone will be of ſervice to them. May not what St. *Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, be properly applied here? That he *who hath raiſed a bad Structure, upon a good Foundation, ſhall indeed be ſaved, yet ſo as by Fire; but his Work ſhall be burnt, being of combuſtible Stuff, as Wood, Hay, and Stubble*, &c. Thus thoſe who have taught ſeveral Errors, but with a good Intention, will loſe the Fruit of their Labour, but the Foundation of their Intention will ſubſiſt in the midſt of the Fire, which ſhall conſume all the reſt; nor is there any need for ſuppoſing a material Fire; GOD himſelf is a *conſuming Fire* for all Error and Unrighteouſneſs.

There

There the ſincerely pious will find themſelves very far from what they thought themſelves; and the advantageous Opinion Mankind entertained of them will inhance their Confuſion: there the whole Detail of the divine Bounties, and their own Ingratitude, will be ſet before their eyes; and this View will contain in it all that is moſt ſtrongly afflicting.

There, what we eſteem great in this World, will appear a mere nothing; every thing will vaniſh before the infinite Being and ſupreme Cauſe.

But nothing will give Men ſo much pain, as the knowledge of Truths not reduced to practice, and the Injury done to their Neighbour, by not giving him a good Example; and who knows to what degree all thoſe Reflections may afflict ſeparate Souls? If the greateſt Miſeries we endure here are only the Effects of Sin, who can certainly know how tormenting and bitter the *Cauſe* itſelf may prove to a Soul, which will feel its whole Force? The Saints who in this Life have felt ſomething of it, ſuch as *David*, *Aſaph*, *Heman*, *Jeremy*, *Job*, &c. being unexceptionable Witneſſes, can inform us in that point.

Here an Objection may be urged, from what I have elſewhere advanced, That the *Meaſure of Holineſs conſtitutes the Meaſure of Happineſs*; and conſequently, that thoſe in *whom Good* ſhall prevail above *Evil*, muſt be more

more happy than miserable. If so, says the Objector, the State you just now described, can relate to only those Souls in which *Evil* outweighs *Good*; for you represent them in a most distressed and painful Situation.

To this I reply, that I do not positively determine to which Class, what I just now said may be applied; they are only general Expressions, that must vary according to the different Degrees of Perfection or Imperfection. However, not to wander from the *Thesis* we have laid down, I say, it does not thence follow, that every Soul in which the Principle of *Good* is more prevalent than that of *Evil*, must therefore actually be in a State more pleasant than tormenting. This sounds like a Paradox; but the following Examples will illustrate it.

A Kingdom harassed with Civil War, where the loyal Party is stronger than that of the Rebels, will by that means be in a fair way to have Peace and Tranquillity; but the Inhabitants of this Kingdom cannot enjoy a perfect Peace, till the loyal Party has gained a compleat Victory; whilst the War continues, they will always have a share in the Troubles and Confusions that are inseparable from it. Thus, though by their Advantages over the Enemy, they will be more happy than miserable, yet their Situation would be actually more distressed than pleasant.

Hence we may easily conceive, that a Soul

in

in which the Principle of *Good* is more prevalent than that of *Evil*, muſt feel a greater Senſe of the Pain of *Evil*, whilſt the Struggle continues, than of the Enjoyment of *Good*: And this we ſee verified every day, in the caſe of bodily Health; a Man who has a Principle of Health ſtronger than that of Sickneſs, whoſe Blood and noble Parts are in good order, is in the main more healthy than ſick; but, though the Pain he ſuffers be not dangerous, yet he cannot enjoy the Benefit of Health, till he is free from all manner of Pain; he is even more ſenſible of a little Ailment, than of the Health of his whole Body.

But it may be aſked, Why do not the moſt imperfect Souls endure in this Life Pains in proportion to the bad State of their inner Man? Becauſe the Soul, while in the Body, is in a ſort of Lethargy, that makes it inſenſible of its greateſt Calamities; the more imperfect it is, and employed on ſenſible Objects, the more it is a Stranger to its own inward Diſorders.

A Soul that diſengages itſelf in this Life from the Senſes, and is employed on inviſible Objects, has a watchful Eye over what paſſes within itſelf, is much more ſenſible of the leaſt Deformity. When being diſengaged from all that is material, the Divine Light ſhall dart fully upon it, how much more ſenſible will it be of what may ever injure infinite Holineſs? Hence

Hence we may likewise draw an Argument for the Necessity of Purification; I ask those who deny it, Can a Man be saved without Repentance? Can he really repent, without knowing and feeling his Misery? But how many moderately virtuous Persons are there, who in this Life never knew the least part of their inward Misery, and yet certainly cannot be ranked with the Reprobate?

I further ask, Whether the Sorrow of true Repentance ought to flow from the Love of GOD, or the Fear of Hell? But how many of those last mentioned know Religion, only by Rewards and Punishments, and are Strangers to the Amiableness of GOD? It is not therefore the Love of him, that is the Cause of their Sorrow.

To this it may be answered, That this * Motive may be excited in a Soul at the last Moments. And though it should produce but one single Act of the Love of GOD, that

* This way of speaking favours of a Metamorphosis, or rather of Fiction; nothing is more contrary to the Nature of Man, than to pretend to excite Motives in him; the most real Motives are very often those he least perceives, and which prompt him to Action, without his reflecting on them. Whatever is excited suddenly, is borrowed and counterfeit, or at least imaginary. Imagination may be excited, and certain Motions raised in the Machine, which are termed *Contrition*, and *Acts of the Love of God*; but I would know whether these fine Words will make the Thing real, and whether they'll pass for current Coin in the invisible World.

that would be sufficient to save it. Now I reply, That an Act so suddenly produced is very equivocal; but supposing it sincere, and strong enough to secure a Soul from Damnation, it does not thence follow, that therefore it will put it in the actual possession of the Object.

The Soul must first know the Object it designs to love. It must know its self, and what is either to be destroyed, or built up there: which will not be the Work of a few days.

In reality, the Acts here supposed, how sincere soever they may be, are rather Acts of *desiring* to love GOD, than Acts of real Love. The Desire a Man may have of pulling down an old Building, in order to raise a new one, is many Removes from the actual Execution of that Design.

After all, can any one acquainted with Man imagine, that some good Wishes and Desires are sufficient to change the Bottom of his Heart, and make him a new Man?

I believe, Sir, it would be superfluous to push our Conjectures any farther about the Nature of the Purification of Souls separated from the Body; it would be certainly more useful to draw from them practical Rules for our Conduct; which I leave to your Reflection.

P. S. I shall, by way of Postscript, answer the following Question; *viz.* Whether those

thoſe who have wanted the Means of Salvation in this Life, and have undergone all manner of Sufferings, muſt endure the pain of a Purification in the other?

To which I anſwer, That bodily Sufferings do not purify us *phyſically*, but only ſo far as they may ſerve as Means to the Perſon who endures them, for entering into himſelf, and knowing himſelf better; as they are proper for delivering him from Diſſipation and Senſuality, and exerciſe him in Patience and Reſignation. In all theſe reſpects, Sufferings are ſo many Steps to, or diſtant means of Sanctity, as the Apoſtle inſinuateth, when he tells us, That *God chaſtiſeth us for our Benefit, to the end, we may be Partakers of his Holineſs*; but the near and immediate Means are purely ſpiritual; ſuch as the knowledge of Truth, and of ourſelves, from which other ſorts of Sufferings may ariſe, but of a very different nature from the former.

I ſay then, in anſwer to the Queſtion, that it is highly probable, that thoſe whoſe Lives have been one continued Series of bodily Sufferings, and who have not had an opportunity of knowing the Truth, muſt nevertheleſs paſs through a State of *Purification*; but there is reaſon to preſume it will give them but little Pain, and will, perhaps, in ſome reſpects, afford more Comfort than Bitterneſs. This may be inferred from the Certainty of a *Compenſation*; theſe have had their

their Good in this Life; it is but just they should be comforted in that which is to come.

But a physical Reason may likewise be assigned for this, drawn from the preceding Truths.

First, Such Souls as we have just now supposed, have already, by their Sufferings, made the first Steps toward Sanctity, or have had the negative Means, so far as the Inclinations to Pleasure and Vanity were never strengthened in them, or converted into Habits; from whence it follows, that when the Truth shall be manifested in them, it will find the less Deformity, and fewer Irregularities to rectify.

2dly, The Manifestation of Truth till then not known, and which they never have resisted, cannot but occasion a very agreeable Surprize. Those Souls, whose spiritual Faculties had been, as it were, benumbed, by a multitude of Obstacles, shall find themselves, at their Separation from the Body, like a blind Man, who recovers his Sight, and even knows not that it is possible to see.

In the 3d place, Such Souls will have nothing to suffer from a Privation of sensible Objects, or from the Impressions that the Enjoyment of such Objects might have made upon them; far from being habituated to the Taste of Pleasure, they have been accustomed only to Pain; and this single Consideration will make a very great difference betwixt them,

and

and thoſe of contrary Habits: for as it is extremely painful to paſs from Enjoyment to Privation, (which becomes a real Pain) ſo the Tranſition from Pain to Reſt is exquiſitely pleaſant.

Hence it is eaſy to conceive, that the Purification of ſuch Souls, will not inhance their Anguiſh, but prove rather an Alleviation of it, by the Satisfaction they will receive from the Diſcovery of Truth, and the Recovery of the Uſe of their Faculties, in regard to it.

This ſame Truth will not indeed fail to rebuke them for all it finds unjuſt in them, and reproach them in particular with what they have committed againſt the Light of their Conſcience; this they muſt certainly undergo, and it will be more or leſs painful to them, as they have ſinned more or leſs voluntarily. But there is reaſon to believe, that the Truth finding them flexible, will make much leſs violent Impreſſions on them, than on Souls accuſtomed to Reſiſtance, and hardened againſt all its Admonitions.

From hence we may underſtand the Reaſon of thoſe repeated Declarations of our Saviour, *Bleſſed are ye who mourn now, for ye ſhall be comforted; but woe to you who now enjoy Pleaſure, for ye ſhall cry and lament.* This State then ſeems to be only ordained to make amends to ſome for the Hardſhips they have endured, and puniſh others for the abuſe of the good things they have here enjoyed.

However, if we consider things as they are in their own Nature, we shall find, that this Compensation does not proceed from an arbitrary Will in GOD, either to reward or punish, but is the natural Effect resulting from each Man's Disposition, when he leaves this World.

ANSWER *to* LETTER XII.

SIR,

THE Illustrations contained in your last, leave me no more Difficulties to propose. When I happened to form any one, on perusing your Letter, I soon met with a Solution: it would be much more useful, as you justly observe, to make those Truths subservient to the Conduct of Life; allow me therefore to intreat you to communicate your farther Reflections on this Subject.

You have hitherto handled the State of *Purification*, independently of *Restoration*; in condescension to those, who would not admit of the latter. Can you not now unite those two Points, and shew what Instructions and Uses may be drawn from them both? I hope you will not refuse me that Satisfaction.

LET-

LETTER XIII.

Wherein is ſhewn, that, admitting the different Sentiments of Divines together, both the Reſtoration and Purification, as here propoſed, are proved.

SIR,

NOthing is more eaſy than to unite the two Subjects, which we have hitherto conſidered ſeparately. They not only agree perfectly well, but, which is more, are inſeparably connected; for, to take the matter right, one is only the End of the other, the *Purification* of Souls having no other End, but their *Reſtoration.*

Both of them ſhew us the unchangeable Attributes of the Deity, and unravel thoſe Obſcurities and ſeeming Contrarieties, which appear to us to be oppoſite to the Wiſdom of his Proceedings.

When we go back to the Origin of all things, we find nothing there but *God alone*, poſſeſſing in himſelf the Fulneſs of *Being*, *Life*, and *Happineſs*; in ſhort all, Perfection.

When we come down to what we know of his Works, we find Creatures perfectly good, the nobleſt of which bears the Image of his Creator, and for whom all other Creatures were formed. Eſſential Goodneſs can produce nothing but what is good. Such

were all his Works, when they came first out of his hands; of which sovereign Wisdom bears witness, *And God saw all that he had made, and behold it was very good.* Gen. ch. i.

After this, it is hard to conceive how *moral* and *physical Evil* come into the World; if GOD has created nothing but what was good, whence proceed the *Evils* wherewith the Earth is filled?

Let us here say, that GOD, who is the Author of all *Being* and *Reality*, cannot be the Author of *Evil*; since, properly speaking, *Evil* is no *Reality*; it is rather a *Negation* of Being, a Defect of *Reality* and *Perfection*, a Disorder crept in among Creatures well ordered.

Moral Evil is an accidental Disorder to *Spirits*, as *Natural Evil* is to the *corporeal* Nature. *Moral Evil* must be the *Cause* of *physical Evil.*

It is plain, that corporeal Nature, or Matter, not being of the number of free Agents, could not of itself deviate from the Order in which it was created. This Deviation or Disorder must be ascribed to Spirits, who by an ill use of their Liberty, have introduced Confusion among themselves, and all subordinate Beings; that is, through all material Nature; which, being put under Man, must share his Disaster; as the Apostle assures us, *The Creatures are subjected to Vanity and Bondage,*

dage, by the Will of him who hath subjected them thereto, viz. by the Will of Man.

Behold then the Works of GOD fallen from their original Beauty, and the nobleſt of his Creatures, even his own Image, diſfigured! But is the Damage irreparable? Is the great Architect neither able nor willing to find out an Expedient for reſtoring the Works of his own hands?

This is a Subject of great diſpute among the Divines, who are diſtinguiſhed by the Name of *Particulariſts* and *Univerſaliſts*, each of them maintaining a *Theſis* built upon ſome Truths, though indeed they know but one part of them; could they once unfold them, they would ſoon agree. Perhaps the Contents of theſe Letters concerning a *Reſtoration* and *Purification* may prove the Key to the whole. This is what I ſhall now endeavour to illuſtrate.

The above-mentioned Divines agree in a general Anſwer to the Queſtion propoſed, That GOD both *can* and *will* do it; the firſt of theſe Propoſitions is founded on the *Omnipotence* of the Creator; the ſecond on his *Goodneſs*. But then they differ, in the following Points.

The *Particulariſts* reſtrain this Will to a ſmall number, called by them the *Elect*; whereas the *Univerſaliſts* maintain, that GOD will ſave all Men.

The former reply, "That the Will of "GOD is efficacious, and therefore he cannot "fall short of his Purpose; that if he willed "all Men to be saved, he would save them "effectually; that it is annihilating his Om- "nipotence to say, He desires to save all "Men, but that he cannot."

The *Universalists*, on the other hand, maintain, "That it is injurious to the Goodness "of GOD, to say, that he can save all Men, "and will only save a part; that it is accu- "sing him of Cruelty, who desires that none "should perish, but that all may come to "Repentance; that if this Will hath not its "Effect, the Fault is not on GOD's part, "but on Man's, who resists the gracious "Will of his Creator."

Hence it appears, that the Divines of both Denominations, after they have assented to the *Thesis* in *general*, deny it when they come to *Particulars*; the former injure the Ideas we have of the *Goodness* of GOD, the latter those we entertain of his *Omnipotence*. Let us now see whether we cannot unfold the Riddle: and,

First, We grant the *Particularists*, that the Will of GOD is efficacious; that he cannot be frustrated of his Purpose; and that all those whom he hath predestinated to Salvation, and for whom CHRIST died, will be infallibly saved.

2dly, We likewise grant the *Universalists*, that GOD wills all Men should be saved; that

that he destines no one to Misery; that CHRIST has tasted Death for all Men, and designed, by his being lifted up from Earth, to draw all Mankind to him.

This seems contradictory; we shall be able to clear up the matter, if we here join together the different *Theses* of each Party.

The Acts of the Divine Will are efficacious. Partic.

God wills all Men to be saved. Univers.

Therefore, all Men will one day be saved.

All those whom God has predestinated to Salvation, will infallibly be saved. Partic.

God predestinateth none to Wrath, but to Salvation. Univers.

Therefore all will be infallibly saved.

All those for whom CHRIST died, will partake of Salvation. Partic.

JESUS CHRIST tasted Death for all, and was lifted up from Earth, to draw all Men to him. Univers.

Therefore all will partake of Salvation, and at last be drawn after him.

I foresee the Conclusion will be denied, and the Argument retorted as follows, *viz. Salvation is promised only to those who are sanctified.*

Infinitely more die, who are not sanctified, than who are.

Therefore all Men will not be saved.

Now to shew that the first Conclusion is just, and the second false, we need only join to these two Propositions a third drawn from the Principles of the *Universalists*.

Salvation is promiſed only to thoſe who are ſanctified. God wills that all Men come to Repentance, and the knowledge of the Truth; all of them do not attain to it in this Life.

Therefore this muſt be done in the other.

In order to ſupport this Concluſion, which is a new Propoſition, let us make uſe of ſome Principles of the ſame Divines.

God offers all Men the Means of Sanctification; but commits no Violence on their Liberty; all do not make their advantage of the Profer; all do not make uſe of thoſe Means to come to Repentance and Sanctification.

I aſk now, Shall the Purpoſes of GOD be fruſtrated by the Reſiſtance of Man? Will he not find ſome Method for bringing them to Repentance and Holineſs, without forcing their Liberty? If they do not correſpond with thoſe Means in this Life, which is but of a Minute's Duration, when compared with Eternity, will he confine his Concern for the Reſtoration of his Work to that ſhort Span? Shall not he who is ſo well acquainted with all its Springs, be able to bring it back to himſelf at laſt?

To this Queſtion I ſhall oppoſe a Principle of the *Particulariſts*, which will ſerve as an Anſwer to it, *viz.*

The Gifts and Calling of God are without Repentance; all thoſe whom God has predeſtinated to Salvation, are alſo predeſtinated to the Means thereof.

According to the *Univerſaliſts*, all are predeſtinated to Salvation: *Therefore*

Therefore all are predeſtinated to the Meons of Salvation.

The Will of GOD muſt be accompliſhed ſooner or later, and is not reſtrained to any Time or Place. If then there are numberleſs Creatures who have in this Life wanted Means ſufficient for Salvation, or have not made uſe of them when afforded; they will be allow'd Time, when ſooner or later they will make an advantage of them; becauſe then they will know their Value; and this Time is no other than that of the *Purification* of Souls after this Life, which is deſigned only for their *Reſtoration.*

This Purification may be divided into two Claſſes, each containing almoſt an infinite Diverſity of Degrees; one may bear the Name of *Hell*, in regard of the Obduracy of thoſe who ſhall endure its Torments, and the Heat of the Fire that will conſume them; the other may be called a *Middle State*, becauſe it will ſerve to purify thoſe Souls that are but indifferently virtuous, whoſe Sanctification, while here, was but begun. They will both tend, at laſt, to reſtore the Image of GOD in all Men.

I ſaid, in the beginning of this Letter, *That the knowledge of theſe Truths manifeſted to us the unchangeable Attributes of the Deity, and cleared up to us a great many Obſcurities, and ſeeming Contradictions.* We have ſeen, that the Contradictions among Divines are hereby

effectually reconciled, and that they differ only as they ſeparate Doctrines which ought to be united.

I will here add, that hereby the *Goodneſs* of GOD, his *Omnipotence*, *Wiſdom*, *Juſtice*, *Holineſs*, *Faithfulneſs*, and *Mercy*, are fully manifeſted to us.

Firſt, I ſay, his *Goodneſs*, as GOD wills the Happineſs of all his Creatures, and their Return to the primitive Perfection they had received at his hands.

His *Omnipotence*, as it hence appears that the Will of GOD is efficacious; that his Arm is not ſhortned, and that he is able, ſooner or later, to accompliſh all his Deſigns.

His *Faithfulneſs*, as it thereby appears, that his Gifts and his Calling are without Repentance; that having once deſtined Man to Bliſs, he doth not deſiſt from his firſt Deſign.

His *Mercy*, as he furniſhes the moſt rebellious with the Means of Sanctification, and this without fixing any Bounds to it; as he forgets the Outrages, Contempt, and Diſobedience of wicked Men; in a word, as he extends the Effects of this Mercy, not to ſome only, but to all without exception, not only in this Life, but alſo in the Life to come.

What ſhall we think of the *Juſtice* and *Holineſs* of GOD? Will not they have their Courſe? Will not *Goodneſs* and *Mercy* oppoſe them? Certainly *Juſtice* and *Holineſs* are not contrary to *Goodneſs* and *Mercy*; and it is impoſſible

poſſible that theſe ſhould interrupt the Effects of the other Attributes. Let us ſay rather, that they concur in the ſame Deſign of purifying Men, although here *Juſtice* and *Holineſs* manifeſt themſelves in a more poſitive manner.

His *Juſtice* is manifeſted, by his leaving every one to *reap* the Fruits of what he has *ſown*, by making *Tribulation* and *Anguiſh* fall upon every *Soul that doth evil, and making them then eat the Fruit of their own Doings and Devices.*

His *Holineſs* is manifeſted, as it hence appears, that GOD doth not deſign to be reunited to his Creatures, before he has ſanctified them; there can be no Communion in them between *Light* and *Darkneſs*; till they become *Children of the Light*, Divine Juſtice will be the ſame to them, that Fire is to *Hay* and *Stubble*. And this Fire will never ceaſe to burn, till all *Unrighteouſneſs* is conſumed. Then only *Juſtice will ceaſe to be rigorous, without ceaſing to be juſt.*

Let us likewiſe add, that this Purification manifeſteth the depth of the Divine *Wiſdom*, in having found out a way how to replace all Creatures in their original State at laſt, by bringing them back, ſooner or later, to that Holineſs from which they were ſo far removed; and that by the Operations of *Truth* and *Juſtice*, without offering Violence to their Liberty.

The Divine Wisdom farther appears, in that the Work of Redemption ultimately tends to destroy all the Enemies of GOD, and extends its Effects, without measure, to all his Creatures, till having nothing foreign in them, GOD himself may be *All in All. Surely this proceeds from the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in Counsel, and excellent in Working.*

Let us here farther observe, that nothing is more proper for justifying *Providence*, not only in regard to the *Blessings* and *Miseries*, which seem in this Life to be distributed with so much inequality; but particularly in regard to the Means of Salvation, which it bestows on some liberally, and seems to refuse them to others.

Since the Creation of the World, infinitely more Men have been unprovided with those Means, than have enjoyed them. Though all Men have had the Testimony of Conscience within them, the Obstacles from without, together with the Bias of irregular Inclinations, have been too strong, and almost insurmountable to this Principle of Truth, which was, as it were, buried in them.

What Comparison is there, as to the Means of Salvation, between the *Jewish* Nation, from *Moses* to CHRIST, and the numberless multitude of the Pagan World? And what Comparison is there in this respect between *Christians*, and an infinity of Barbarians, who

who hardly know any Distinction of Good and Evil; wild and savage People, who have little more of Humanity than the bare Form?

What Comparison is there between Christians themselves, some of whom are, in respect of others, like so many Beasts of Burden, bowed down from their Youth, under the Weight of Toil and Labour, which scarce allow them time to enquire, whether they have Souls to cultivate and prepare for a future Life? And who, on observing such Disproportions between those who by nature are of equal Dignity, can discern Impartiality in GOD?

Certainly nothing can justify this Conduct, but the knowledge of a State of *Purification*, where those who have been unprovided with the means of coming to the Knowledge of Truth in this Life, will find them in another.

May we not here apply, what St. *Peter* says, That *CHRIST preached to the Spirits in Prison, that had been disobedient in the days of* Noah? To what purpose should CHRIST preach to them, were it not to bring them to Repentance, and the knowledge of Truth? But whether CHRIST exercised this Office towards them in Person, or merely by manifesting Truth to them, is of small importance to determine. Some Divines are of opinion, that the Article of the Creed, *He descended into Hell*, relates to this; and that those other Words of the same *Epistle* amount to the same Sense; *For this cause was the Gospel preached also*

also to them that were dead, that they might be judged according to Men in the Flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit. 1 Epist. iv. 6. By the *Flesh*, nothing can be here meant but the Principle of Corruption, which Souls carry with them into the other Life; the *Judgment* that must be exercised upon them, the Fire of Justice, for the destruction of *Evil*, which must at last end in *the Life of God in the Spirit*, can only signify the Re-establishment of Souls, and their Reunion with GOD.

In whatever sense the Word *preached* is understood, it must be the Truth published and manifested to the Dead, as a means of Sanctification, which is undoubtedly glad Tidings for them.

We may farther say, that this Truth justifies the Equity of GOD, in all the dreadful Judgments he has inflicted on whole Nations, a great part whereof knew neither Good nor Evil. Not to mention the Deluge, nor the Burning of *Sodom* and *Gomorha*; how terrible was the Slaughter in all the Cities of *Canaan*, that were struck as so many declared Rebels? On how many Occasions have we seen Children die for the Iniquity of their Fathers, and Subjects for that of Princes; such as the sixty Sons of *Achab*, the ten Sons of *Saul*, the ten Sons of *Haman*, the Children of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, and a multitude of *Israelites*, for the Sin of *David*, their King.

In

In reality, did we not know, that in the other Life there will be a perfect *Compenſation*, both in regard to the Means of Salvation, and *Bleſſings* and *Miſeries*; ſhould we not be tempted to cry out, *Is there Knowledge in the Lord, and does he weigh all Men in an equal Balance?*

What Concluſion does our Saviour draw from the diſproportion that is viſible in this Life, in relation to the Effects of Juſtice? That this Juſtice ſhall, ſooner or later, have its Courſe on all Men. *Do you think*, ſays he, *that they who have ſuffered theſe things, are greater Sinners than others? I tell you no; but except you repent, you ſhall likewiſe periſh* *.

It is evident, that all thoſe who are in the ſame State of Depravation, do not in this Life ſuffer the ſame Puniſhments; Juſtice therefore will be employed on them in the other.

I ſhould never end my Letter, ſhould I undertake to quote all the Paſſages of Scripture to this purpoſe. It is time to conclude. You will obſerve, Sir, that the Truths I have met with in my way, have prevented my making the practical Inferences which I intended; but a little Reflection of your own will diſcover them better than any thing I can ſay.

* Such an Argument in the Mouth of the Son of God, who muſt certainly know the Compenſations that Divine Juſtice hath in reſerve for Men, ought not to be of little weight with us.

ANSWER *to* LETTER XIII.

SIR,

I Cannot dispense with your Remarks on the practical Uses. Though your last is a most instructive Recapitulation of the essential Parts of your preceding Letters, there will still be something wanting, if you do not shew expressly the Influence those Truths may have in rectifying our Judgments, and regulating our Conduct.

It is a Prejudice very favourable to the *Thesis* you have maintained, though it were supported by no other Proof, that at your first setting out, you established it on the unchangeable Ideas we have of the Divine Perfections, and concluded with demonstrating, that the same *Thesis* serves to place the great Harmony of those Perfections, in whatever relates to our Salvation, in a stronger Light.

The Justification of Providence, the Union of the different Sentiments of Divines, the Obscurities in the Ways of GOD, cannot flow from an erroneous *Thesis*; and this, Sir, is what I hope you'll not fail to set in its proper Light.

LET-

LETTER XIV.

Wherein the practical Uſes, that reſult from the preceding Diſcourſes, are ſet forth.

SIR,

THE Law and Goſpel having no other End, but that of leading Men to *Charity* and *Holineſs*, according to JESUS CHRIST, and St. *Paul*; every Opinion that has the leaſt Tendency, either directly or indirectly, to lead from this End, ought to be ſuſpected.

If the Doctrine that has been the Subject of the preceding Letters, was of this kind, I ſhould be ready to renounce it; but if, on the contrary, it can be ſhewn, that it includes the ſtrongeſt Motives, for every one to advance in Holineſs, this Conſideration will add a new degree of Probability to the Arguments I have already advanced.

Among Perſons who have any concern for their Salvation, ſome are moſt affected with the Motive of *Love*; others are more ſo with that of *Fear*. I dare affirm, that theſe two Motives flow more naturally, and with greater Force and Certainty, from the Truths we have laid down, than from the oppoſite Opinion; which I think it will not be hard to demonſtrate. I begin with the firſt kind of Motive.

I ſay then, if we meaſure the degree of *Love*, by the Perfection of the Object, and the

the Knowledge we have of it; nothing is more proper than these Truths, to make us in love with *sovereign Perfection*, because nothing appears more amiable to us, whether we consider it in itself, or in regard to us.

First, they make us consider the Deity in himself, as the Source of *Being*, *Perfection*, and *Happiness*; as that *pure Goodness* from which no *Evil* can proceed; as the *Unchangeable Being*, incapable of the least Variation.

In regard to ourselves, they make us consider him as *communicative Goodness*, that can only will to confer on or procure for his Creatures what is good.

As *unalterable* and *impartial Justice*, incapable of all Preference, that judges invariably of things, as they really are in themselves.

As *Mercy without measure*, which doth good to the Wicked and Ungrateful, is accessible to every Creature, and whose Effects are universal.

As *infinitely penetrating Wisdom*, which thoroughly knows all the Springs of its Work, and employs an infinite Diversity of Means to restore it to its original Perfection.

As boundless Omnipotence, *that does whatever it listeth, both in the Armies of Heaven, and amongst the Inhabitants of the Earth; whose hand none can stay from working, nor say unto it, What dost thou?*

In a word, *as the Saviour of all Mankind*, publishing his *Good Will* towards them, and the

the Design he has formed of re-uniting them all to himself at last, by removing all Obstacles to that Union.

In reality, if any thing can make an Impression upon a Heart capable of feeling, this Idea of GOD must certainly do it; and it will be impossible for those who know him as such, not to love him above all things.

Here I might add, for the satisfaction of those who love a detail of Particulars, that *Faith*, *Repentance*, *Patience*, *Hope*, and the *Love of our Neighbour*, flow from the same Principles.

Can *Faith* have a better Foundation than the Knowledge of a GOD, who *will* be the Saviour of all Men, and is *able* to perform whatever he *wills?*

What more proper means for producing Repentance, than the Knowledge of a *Justice*, that certainly condemns Wickedness, and of a Mercy accessible to all such, as are willing to make war on Iniquity, 'till it is entirely destroyed?

What is more proper for forming *Hope*, than to know that GOD has no Inclination to cast off his Creatures; that he entertains *Thoughts of Peace, not of Evil, in order to give them such an End as they can desire?*

What more efficacious Motive can be conceived for determining us to the Exercise of Prayer, than to know GOD under the Idea of *Communicative Goodness*, who both *can* and *will*

will beſtow all manner of Bleſſings on thoſe, to whom he has given his own Son? What is more proper for prevailing with us to hate Sin, than to know that it is the only *Cauſe* of all the *Evils* with which the World is infected? In ſhort, what is more proper for producing Patience, than to know that theſe very *Evils*, if rightly uſed, may become means our Purification?

I now come to the *Love of our Neighbour*; certainly nothing is more efficacious for rendering it univerſal, ſincere, impartial, and communicative: To regard all Mankind as the Workmanſhip of GOD, formed originally after his own Image, called to recover it one day; to conſider the Vices and Imperfections wherewith Men are tainted, as ſomething foreign to their Nature, as ſo many grievous Diſtempers, that after ſevere Sufferings, ſhall at laſt be cured: Is any thing more proper for inſpiring us with a compaſſionate and fraternal Love than ſuch Conſiderations?

It is in this Senſe, that all Men truly are, and ever will be our *Neighbours*; and may be properly called *Members* one of another, and of CHRIST himſelf, without which the Reprobate could neither be Members of CHRIST, nor of his Children. In this ſenſe they may be conſidered as *ſick Members*, that muſt undergo the Operations of Fire and Inſtruments, before they are entirely cured.

What

What greater Encouragement to labour for the Salvation of our Neighbour, than to know that our Labour will not be altogether uſeleſs; that the Seed ſown in this Life, which at preſent ſeems to be choaked with Briars and Thorns, will ſooner or later produce Fruit; that the Truth which Men now reject, will one day ſhine with full luſtre in their Conſcience? In ſhort, that by labouring for our Neighbours, we labour for thoſe who will hereafter be Members of the Univerſal Church; that the good Examples we ſet before them, and all the Pains we take for them, will ſooner or later have their deſired Effect? And would not this be Reward enough, though there was no other?

We may likewiſe add, that nothing is ſo proper for *rectifying our Judgments*, concerning the *Dead* or the *Dying*.

Here the Sticklers for Orthodoxy will cry out, *That we are not permitted to judge*; and yet, according to their own Principles, they cannot avoid judging. If they acknowledge no *Medium* between a ſovereign Bliſs and eternal Damnation, they neceſſarily judge that all who die, are either in one or the other of thoſe Extremes. It is true, that in order to judge charitably, they beſtow Happineſs on almoſt all Men. But muſt *Charity* be oppoſite to *Truth?* And is it not an Injury to *Truth*, to aſſign the Crown of Righteouſneſs to thoſe, who have neither fought the good Fight, nor, perhaps,

perhaps, so much as entered upon a Course of Holiness?

Here it may be said, it wou'd be better not to judge at all. But, is a Man Master of his Judgments, as he is of his Words? Does not Evidence, as it appears to our Understanding, unavoidably determine us in our Judgments? If then we maintain as a Principle, that in the next Life, there are only the two Extremes of Happiness and Misery, shall we not be naturally induced to assign each Man the Place, that seems best to suit his Conduct here?

Upon this foot, they necessarily judge that Thousands of Creatures, who die with Dispositions contrary to Holiness, are eternally damned. It would be to no purpose to reply, that they pass no such Judgment; we may deceive ourselves, and fancy we do not judge; but the ground-work of our Judgments subsists, and necessarily follows the Evidence that results from our Principles.

Would we find out a sure Method not to judge of the Condition of the Dying, or to form only upright Judgments, conformable to Truth; let us judge that every one is happy or miserable, in proportion to his good or bad Qualities; and in so doing we can neither injure them, nor be deceived ourselves; of which discreet Behaviour St. *Peter* gives us an Instance, when speaking of *Judas*'s Death, he

he only says, that *he was gone to his own Place.*

Here then is a great comfort for Persons full of Charity, who would be grievously affected at the Eternal Loss of so many Millions of Souls. It is certain therefore, that the Doctrine here laid down, concerning *Purification* and *Restoration*, is better calculated than any other, for inspiring us with *Universal Charity* to our Neighbour, and rectifying our Judgments concerning him.

But if the first Part of it is comfortable, and proper to make an Impression upon generous Souls, the second is no less fit to awake, by Motives of Fear, those Persons who can be affected only by Considerations of Self-Interest; but as I have already touch'd on this Head in my sixth Letter, I shall be the shorter upon it here.

Is any thing more proper for over-turning the false Maxims, so much in vogue, in which Numbers securely lull themselves asleep, than the knowledge of an *unchangeable Justice*, that constantly judges of things, as they really are; and of a *Mercy*, which is so far from being contrary to *Justice*, that it concurs with it in the grand Design of purifying Mankind? This being laid down, what will become of the hopes of those, who imagine that Mercy will prevail against Justice, and stop its Course, so that they shall feel none of its Effects.

If GOD is incapable of *Anger*, *Provocation*, and *Revenge*, as we have proved; he is incapable of being appeased, of being moved with repeated Cries, or feeling Compassion* like ours, which proceeds only from the Weakness of our Nature; this being supposed, what will become of those flattering hopes, that we shall appease the Deity with Tears; that on begging Grace and Mercy, he will be easily prevail'd on to relent?

If the greatest Favour, that GOD can do Men, is to *purify* them; and if this is the only way by which they can arrive at Happiness; how can they desire *Mercy*, to exempt them from Purification? Could they obtain their request, they would obtain *Eternal Torment*, since without Holiness they will never see the face of GOD.

If

* But how does this agree with the numerous Declarations in Scripture, concerning the *Compassion of GOD?* Compassion in GOD, is different from that which Man is susceptible of. The latter proceeds from the Impressions which the Sufferings of his Fellow-Creatures makes upon him; this proves painful, and presses him to relieve his Neighbour, in order to relieve himself. But in GOD, *Compassion* is essentially the same as his *Goodness*, joined to the Knowledge of human Sufferings, and his Purpose to render Man happy, by destroying the Cause of Sufferings. Hence it is easy to conclude that GOD is incapable of the *false Compassion* ascribed to him. A Father who through Weakness, cannot endure that his Son should undergo certain painful Operations, without which he cannot be cured, increases and lengthens his Misery by a mistaken Compassion.

If the Pardon and Abſolution of the wicked Acts they have committed, cannot make the Soul happy, till the *Source* from which they flow is quite drained; to what purpoſe are ſo many reiterated Petitions, that have nothing more in view but to obtain that Abſolution; whilſt Men give themſelves no manner of trouble to root out the baneful Cauſe of all their Miſery?

There is not any one Illuſion that lulls ſo many Men aſleep as this; for ſay they, provided our Sins are pardoned, every thing will then be ſet to rights. Thus if they do but abſtain from the groſſer Acts of Wickedneſs, they have but little Concern to rectify the Source of their Inclinations and vicious Habits, whoſe diſmal Conſequences they are utter ſtrangers to.

But did ſuch Perſons know what they muſt ſuffer in the future Life, for having neglected in this the Cultivation of their Souls; could they conceive how bitter are the Fruits of this Negligence; they would conſider things in another light.

One of the greateſt Obſtacles to Sanctification in this Life, is the *Love of Pleaſure*, and an *Averſion to Labour*. Theſe two Propenſities make Men live from day to day; indulge themſelves in all the Pleaſures they can find, and avoid every thing that is hard and troubleſome; in ſhort, in making the beſt of the preſent, without diſquieting themſelves

about future Reckonings. But did they but reflect, that by all these delays they only make their Torment a thousand degrees more exquisite, and of longer continuance; they would certainly chuse a laborious Work of some hours duration, rather than Labours whose End they know not.

There is nothing we so industriously avoid in this Life, as to hear distinctly the Rebukes of Conscience; the far greatest part of our Pleasures and Amusements, are of no other use, but to deafen us in this respect: but did we know how dear this Repose will one day cost us; that the *Reproaches* which at present wou'd be supportable, will then be changed into insupportable *Remorse*; that they will be obliged to drink the whole bitter Draught, without the least pleasant Ingredient; they would certainly resolve to hearken to the Admonitions of Truth, what pain soever they might give them.

Nothing is so intolerable to most People, as to turn their Eyes from sensible Objects, to attend to Truth and Things invisible, to make the Objects of a *future State* in some sort familiar to them. But did they consider, that sooner or later they must endure an *entire Separation* from all those Objects that flatter their Senses; that the more they are attached to them, the more painful and insupportable will be the Privation of them: Did they know, that Truth will then be the only Food

of

of the Soul, that it will prove exceeding bitter, and occaſion extreme Anguiſh to all who have not been nouriſhed with it in this Life; they certainly would begin to grow familiar with it, and abandon every Object that may hinder the reliſh of it. They would be conſtantly employed, in ſuch Exerciſes as have a relation to thoſe of a future Life.

Now what Conſequences may not be drawn from the force of Habits; from the Torment we feel when they have taken root, and when an Attempt is made to pluck them up? And truly were we ever ſo little ſenſible of our real Intereſt, we ſhould here find Motives ſtrong enough for ſetting about a Work immediately, which, if deferr'd, is not only render'd much harder than at firſt, but muſt likewiſe be attended with great Bitterneſs and Anguiſh.

Upon the whole, I know not whether any other Syſtem can be invented, that contains Motives ſo efficacious for engaging Mankind to walk in the ways of real Holineſs; any Syſtem which can make Religion more venerable, in the Eyes even of Libertines, or more *lovely* to the Lovers of *Truth*; that places in a clearer Light, the wonderful Harmony of the *Divine Attributes*, and the Reaſons we have to love ſovereign Perfection.

If you find, Sir, that I have tolerably performed the Taſk you laid upon me, I ſhall be ſufficiently rewarded for my Pains.

An ADVERTISEMENT *concerning the following* LETTER.

Although this Letter was not designed for the Press, yet it agreeing very well with the Argument in question, is the reason why it is here inserted.

A LETTER *to Mr.* ***

YOU tell me, Sir, that several Persons are much better pleased with the Fourteen Letters, on the account of the Treatise on *Restoration*, than on that of *Purification*; that the former Subject gives general Satisfaction, whereas the latter creates Uneasiness, and secret Apprehensions they cannot so well get rid of.

I am to tell you, Sir, that I was in the same Case, and was willing to persuade myself, that the *Restoration* might take place without the *Purification*. I found, however, that this System was too well connected to be divided; and that the same Arguments, which prove the Non-Eternity of Hell-Torments, by necessary Consequence establish the Doctrine of *Purification*.

One of those Reasons, amongst others, is that perfect *Equity*, which must deal impartially with Men of the same Origin, and

leave every Individual to reap the Fruits of what he has sown, according to the various and infinite Proportions that shall be found in them. The Idea of Equity supposes that of Proportion; and it is probable that the most wicked will acknowledge the Divine Justice, in the proportion it will establish between them and good Men, and that they will never be able to complain, that they were weighed in an unequal Ballance.

Another way of conceiving the Matter, is, to look upon the painful Course of Purification, as a natural Consequence of the vicious Dispositions, Men carry with them to the other World, rather than as a Punishment, properly so called; which is fully illustrated in the Ninth, and following Letters: it is even a Consequence of Principles advanced in the first Letter on the Nature of Justice. If Justice has no other Tendency than to destroy *Evil* in Man, even by the Pains of Hell, must it not perform the same Office towards all? Must it not eradicate *Evil*, not only out of the Wicked, but even out of the Good, that they may be qualified for a Re-union with their Origin? And if they cannot be compleatly happy, but by the utter destruction of *Evil*, doth not infinite Goodness itself contribute to the same Design?

After all, Hell considered in this Light, is only a State of *Purification*, as the Author observes, although the Degrees of it are in-

finite. Whatever Name may be given to the thing, we are sure to find Consolation in this Idea, in regard to Persons we see die. We leave them to the place assigned them by *Justice*, without forcing Charity so far, as to lodge them all in Heaven.

Hell again, in the common acceptation of the Word, is too dismal a Place for any to be doomed to but the most abandon'd of Men; now the distance between Heaven and Hell is too great, and the Idea of Proportion deeply engraved on the Heart of Man, never allows him to be satisfied with such Disproportions.

After what has been said, though these Reasons should not prove so satisfactory, though we could elude their force by specious Arguments; I very much question, whether we can at all times persuade ourselves of the contrary; a secret Apprehension often makes us dread, that the Consolation pretended to be taken from Scripture, is misapplied, and perhaps misunderstood.

All things duly considered, I think, that if those who will not admit of the Idea of a *Purification*, would but leave the Question in suspense, there would be less danger on that side, than in too great an assurance on the other, which may at last be attended by Mistakes.

A Second LETTER *on the Subject.*

SIR,

THE Converſation you had with the *Foreigner*, who is charged with being a Deiſt, appears to me of great moment.

I am perfectly of your Opinion, that in ſpite of his Prejudices againſt the Chriſtian Religion, he reſpects it in the main; and that if any one could ſhew it him ſuch as it is, he would be obliged to make it reparation, and acknowledge that till then, he had known it only by its Phantom.

As the pretended Contradictions of Scripture, are the Phantoms that frighten him, it would be a great Point gained to clear them up; or rather, to make them diſappear. I think the Book of *Letters concerning the State of Souls ſeparated from their Bodies*, very proper for that purpoſe.

There the Author aſſigns *ambiguous* Expreſſions, which give a handle to thoſe Contradictions, their proper Places. He demonſtrates, that the *True* cannot depend on ſome equivocal Terms, that it ought to be eſtabliſhed on *fixed Principles* and *immutable Truths*. On theſe *Principles* his whole Syſtem is grounded.

He ſhews us, *That the Idea of GOD muſt be the Baſis of whatever can be called Religion*; that the Idea of the Deity, includes that of

the *Infinite Being*; that the Idea of the *Infinite Being*, ſuppoſes the *Infinity* of his *Attributes*; that the *Infinity* of his *Attributes*, ſuppoſes a *perfect Harmony* among them; that the Idea of *perfect Harmony*, overturns the vulgar Opinion, by which *Juſtice* is oppoſed to *Goodneſs*.

The Author ſhews that *Juſtice* is eſſentially no other than *perfect Equity:* that *Juſtice*, taken in this ſenſe, perfectly agrees with *infinite Goodneſs:* that this *Goodneſs* requires that the way to Happineſs be open to all free and intelligent Creatures: that *Equity* requires that each of thoſe Creatures ſhould be more or leſs happy, more or leſs miſerable, according to the uſe they ſhall make of their Liberty: that the Infinity of *Juſtice* conſiſts in entering into *infinite Proportions*, in regard to the different degrees of *Happineſs* or *Miſery*, according to the different degrees of the *Good* and *Evil*, which ſhall be found in each Creature: that the Idea of *perfect Equity* is incompatible with that of *Revenge*, and a *boundleſs Revenge* on *limited* Creatures: that if *Goodneſs* and *Juſtice* ought to concur to the ſame end, the latter muſt be the contrary of *Vengeance.* * That inſtead of keeping guilty Creatures

* We may, however, ſtill ſay, with the Goſpel, that GOD will avenge his Elect. A Father revenges the bad treatment one of his Children may have received from his Brethren, by inflicting on them chaſtiſements proportioned to their fault; but this ſort of *Vengeance*, which is approved of by Juſtice and Goodneſs themſelves, has no connection with that which ſhould pronounce ſentence of eternal Damnation.

Creatures in eternal Torment, it labours to secure them from such a state by the Pains it inflicts on them: that these ought to be *chastizing* and *correcting Pains*, fit for consuming *Evil*, and destroying it to the very *Root:* an Evil which of itself would render Man miserable, without supposing any other cause of his Torments.

On that foot, the employment of *Justice*, will be an employment of *Goodness*, an effect of *Mercy*, which is exercised on all Creatures, not excepting even the most culpable; and which, by Operations proportion'd to the *Evil* they have contracted more or less voluntarily, at last brings them back to their *Origin.*

This Idea of the *Infinity* and *Harmony* of the divine Attributes is so evident, so agreeable to the most plain and *simple Notions*, that we must admit it, as soon as it offers itself. Every man would find it within himself, if he had not industriously thrown a Cloud over it from his Infancy, and substituted in its place an opinion of divine Justice, which can be satisfied only by eternal Torments.

Whence do we take this Idea? From some ambiguous Terms of Scripture; those Terms must be made to stand for first Principles. Who doth not perceive that the Opinion of eternal Damnation serves as a Hinge to the most difficult Disputes and most knotty Controversies? Without this, the Infallibility of the Church would fall to the ground, as well as that famous Maxim, * which serves as a

* No Salvation out of the Church.

Bulwark to its Votaries. *Predeſtination* and *Reprobation* would find no room in the world; the diſtinction of *Particulariſts* and *Univerſaliſts* would ceaſe; all would be *Univerſaliſts*, in the propereſt ſenſe of the Word; whereas thoſe who now aſſume that fine appellation, are ſo only in a very limited and imperfect ſenſe. If they admit the Ideas of *Impartiality* and *infinite Goodneſs* into their Idea of the Divinity, they rob him of the moſt eſſential of his Perfections, or at leaſt ſet bounds to it. They ſuppoſe in GOD a *helpleſs Wiſdom*, reduced to the neceſſity of abandoning his moſt perfect Work, and letting it periſh eternally, for want of means to reſtore it. Thus likewiſe *Omnipotence* ceaſes to be ſuch. GOD wiſhes the ſalvation of all Mankind; but cannot accompliſh his deſign. What an Idea of Divinity is this! and what muſt *Univerſality* be, when eſtabliſhed on ſuch *Ideas?*

That of the *Particulariſts* is indeed leſs tolerable. To ſuppoſe an *Omnipotence*, which attains to its *End*; but whoſe *End* is reduced to the choice of a ſmall number of Creatures for the enjoyment of Happineſs, and leaves the bulk of Mankind in eternal Miſery. To ſuppoſe that *infinite Goodneſs* and *Wiſdom* aſſent to this *Decree*, a Decree founded on the free Will of a Being, who is abſolute Maſter of the Creatures, which he took from nothing: This *Idea*, it muſt be confeſſed, is ſtill more ſurprizing than the other. It cannot be formed without horror. The

The Followers of those two Parties, who, in the whole compass of thirteen or fourteen ages, have not been able to solve the Difficulty, have established the opposite Opinions on the same *Principle*; that of *eternal Damnation.* Both sides have held this as undoubted: They have never thought of enquiring whether a *Principle*, whose Consequences are *contradictory*, must not be a *false Principle**. The Scripture says it in express Terms; that

* It is really surprizing, that Men have not once thought of going back to the source of so many Contradictions. Build on a *simple*, *evident*, *incontestable* Principle, and the consequences will be entirely uniform. Build on a *false* Principle, the justest Arguments will produce the most irreconcileable Contradictions.

Let a *neutral* Person, who is not in possession of this key of a Restoration, hear two of the most able Divines dispute, one of them a *Particularist*, the other an *Universalist*; the more justly they reason, the more embarassed he will be. He will find that each of them breaks in on some one of the divine Attributes: that they charge each other with that bold attempt, and that they have both reason for so doing. They might compose whole Volumes on this Article, without coming near one single Point, and that, as long as they build on the same Principle. What is this Principle? Is it *simple*, *evident*, and *incontestable?* Very far from it. It is a bare supposition, founded on expressions susceptible of different *Senses*. The *Choice* they have made of one *Sense* preferably to another, is what serves as a *Basis* to these Controversies. Ought this to surprise us? It is surprizing, however, that men have not sooner discovered the *False* of a Principle, the consequences of which are necessarily contradictory.

is sufficient; all enquiry would be superfluous.

But can the Expressions of Scripture stand for *first Principles?* At that rate, what must become of that number of Creatures, who are unacquainted with the Scripture? Must they be unprovided with *first Principles?* St. *Paul*, *Rom.* ii. might instruct us in this Point; who tells us, that those who have not a *written Law*, have a *spiritual Law written in their hearts*; and shall *be judged* by that *Law*. Without that *Law*, what could be the Grounds of their Condemnation?

Again, must even such as are in possession of written Revelation be destitute of the *spiritual Law?* This is what no man will venture to advance. If the expressions of Scripture ought to stand for *first Principles*, to what purpose is the *spiritual Law?* All use of it would be destroyed; the Scripture would be placed in its room. The Author of the *Letters* observes, however, that the Scripture itself refers us to that *immutable Law*; that it sends Man to it as a *superiour Tribunal. O House of Israel, are not my ways right?* Would GOD refer Men to a *false Rule*, for examining whether his *Ways* are *right* or not? And may we not conclude with the same Author, that *a Rule to which the Deity submits itself, ought to be perfectly right, the work of his own hand?*

This right Rule therefore must stand for a *first Principle:* it must serve as a *Measure* for

for distinguishing the *True:* ambiguous Expressions ought to depend on it. Bare *Words* shall no longer be a Rule of the *True:* the *True* shall determine the *sense of Words.* Such Expressions as are reconcileable to this *Rule,* shall be received in the *literal* sense: such as appear contrary to it, shall be esteemed enigmatical: they shall be ranked among those *obscure* things, which can make no abatement in the *Force* of the *Evidence.*

This is the measure the Author of the Letters employs for explaining his Subject. It is evident that thus all Difficulties are removed, and the pretended *Contradictions* in the Scripture-Language disappear. It is likewise observable, that the Author is not reduced to the necessity of departing from the Letter, or doing violence to it in order to establish his System: that it contains Expressions, both more numerous, and more positive, than those brought for the contrary Opinion.

If I am not out in my conjectures, the honest *Deist,* who has been long quarrelling with the Scripture, will be cured of his Prejudices by reading those *Letters.* He will there find a System of *Religion,* perfectly agreeable to his own Ideas of *sovereign Equity.*

In that point of view, the disorder and confusion, which appear in the Universe, are no longer surprizing. The disproportion, which Providence seems to make between intelligent Creatures, ceases to be a proof against it. We see beyond this life *Scenes* much more

more conſiderable, where all will be compenſated in the moſt exact proportion.

It is a mere Banter to talk of *infinite Proportions*, a *perfect Compenſation*, as long as eternal Damnation is admitted. The Divines, who have uſed that Language without quitting their opinion, will not underſtand themſelves. They have employ'd fine terms in juſtification of Providence, and to ſtop the mouths of Unbelievers. But thoſe Gentlemen are not ſatisfied with them; they have obſerved that the Lot of infinite Bliſs, oppoſed to that of eternal Deſpair, among Creatures of the ſame nature, would deſtroy all *Proportion?* How is it poſſible to find in it even the ſhadow of *Compenſation?* In this, it may be replied, that the Wicked will have received their *good things* in this life, and ſhall have their *evil things* in the next.

But the Wicked have likewiſe *evil things* in this life; and though they be ſuppoſed in the moſt flouriſhing ſtate imaginable in this World, what will be the conſequence? Shall ſome few hours of falſe Happineſs enter into compariſon with eternal Torments? What an Idea of *Compenſation* is this!

Ought we to be ſurprized, after this, if Men, who have any tolerably juſt way of thinking, cannot bear a Language, ſo manifeſtly contradictory: If they are prejudiced againſt a Book, which is made to ſpeak in this manner, and which ought to be a *divine Book?* Should

Should I enlarge on this subject, I must necessarily repeat what the Author has already said on it *. Permit me, Sir, to refer our *Deist* to the *Letters*. You will much oblige me by letting me know what effect they have on him.

A LETTER to Mr. ***.

Being a Parallel between the LETTERS *and the* DIALOGUES.

IT would be difficult, Sir, to bestow the Prize on one of the Books, you mention, to the prejudice of the other, as I find them of different kinds; and consequently it is not easy to compare them. You are surprized that in your part of the World, the *Letters* have more Partisans than the *Dialogues*. I assure you, Sir, that all things rightly considered, I am not at all surprized at it.

The Author, or Authors of those two Works, though uniform as to the *Substance*, seem to me to have different *Ends* in view.

The

* See the twelfth and thirteenth *Letters*. The latter in particular contains solutions in justification of Providence, which are only mentioned here, and appear there at large.

The two following Pieces likewise afford us satisfactory Solutions.

A Dissertation on the Nature of the divine Goodness *and* Justice, *consider'd in their Origin*. p. 1.

A Dissertation on the nature of Evil *and its Duration*. p. 100.

The Writer of the *Letters* has endeavoured to give a ſhort ſketch of the *univerſal Plan of the Deity, in regard to Mankind.* He rather views Religion from the *Deſigns* of GOD toward Men, than the Diſpoſition, or, if you pleaſe, the *Indiſpoſition* of Men in regard to GOD. He cannot indeed avoid mentioning the latter in ſeveral places; and grounds the neceſſity of *Purification* on the *Depravation* of man. But then he ſhews the *End* in which all thoſe *rigorous ways* will terminate. That *End* is ſo worthy of GOD, and ſo advantageous to Man, that we are charm'd with it as ſoon as we have a glimpſe of it. Beſides, this Plan is ſo agreeable to the moſt *ſimple notion* of *infinite Goodneſs* and *perfect Equity*, that we cannot conceive how we could think otherwiſe.

Chriſtians for many ages have not dared to conſult thoſe *ſimple notions.* They have imagined themſelves obliged to ſilence them, in order, as they have been taught, to ſubmit them to the Deciſions of the Word of GOD; that is, to *Words*, which were made the *Rule* of *Things*, and to which they are at laſt become Slaves.

Here Man is reſtored to the liberty of thinking, and giving room to evidence. He is no longer obliged to admit of things contradictory, or imagine he does admit of them. The religion which is offered him, has no need of foreign authority for enforcing its reception,

ception. He finds the Principles of it engraved on the bottom of his own Heart.

The Mind of Man, formed for Truth, recoils at every thing that implies a contradiction: it is charmed with harmony and evidence: it muſt yield, when they appear. This, no doubt, is what engages the Reader's Judgment in favour of the *Letters:* Moſt men will remember they have frequently had the ſame thoughts, in ſpite of the *Strength* of *Prejudice*. How much are we pleaſed with an Author who explains thoſe *Ideas* and *Sentiments*, we had already entertained, and which we dared not allow their full play?

The Author of the *Dialogues* is in a different Caſe: His deſign was not ſo much to deſcribe the univerſal Plan of Providence, by diſplaying the *Scenes* of the *Life to come*, as to *unveil* Man, ſhew him his *Falſe*, and how little he is diſpoſed to enter into the views of the Deity.

What ſatisfaction ſoever may be found in diſcovering the ways of divine *Wiſdom* and *Juſtice*, as repreſented in the *Letters*; that diſcovery would be of little uſe, if we miſtook ourſelves; we ſhould thereby be out of a condition of performing what was the deſign of our Creation. While we falſely imagined ourſelves in the element of the *True*, we ſhould be ſtrengthened in the *Falſe*, and in *Illuſion*. Thus likewiſe we ſhould prepare for ourſelves the ſtrangeſt *Miſreckoning* at our departure out of this life. It

It would therefore be a good office, while there is time, to assist Men in beginning, in this life, a *Work*, which sooner or later must be performed. This Work is the *study of themselves*, the distinct view of their real *Motives*; a view to be gained only by an attention to the dictates of *Sentiment*, and a *Flexibility* to the Impressions of Truth. This the Author of the *Dialogues* seems to aim at, through his whole Book; and if we follow him somewhat closely, we may perceive, he doth not shoot much short of his mark, not even in the digressions, which seem most foreign to the Purpose.

Several have bestowed the Prize on the *Letters*, for this reason only; because they are not loaded with such digressions: because the whole is carried on in a continued series; in a word, because we see at the first glance what the Author would be at. May not the reason for this different *Form*, be found in the very *Nature* of the things, which each of those Authors undertakes to explain?

The Writer of the *Letters* has given us a compendious *Description* of the ways of GOD: The Writer of the *Dialogues* applies himself particularly to an account of the *ways of Men.*

The ways of GOD, consider'd in the *whole*, are *upright*, *luminous*, and full of *Harmony*, in all their parts: Those of Man are *crooked*, *dark*, and full of *Contradictions.*

Hence

Hence it may be conceived, that it is eaſy for a man who has any key to the former, to reduce them to a regularly connected *Syſtem*; and exclude whatever is unworthy of ſo noble a ſubject, ſo compleat a plan.

But how was it poſſible to reduce to a *Syſtem* the *Falſe*, the *By-ways*, and *voluntary Illuſions* deeply rooted in man? Though it were poſſible, I doubt whether it might be expedient to attempt it. A piece ſo deformed, fully ſeen at the firſt glance, would become uſeleſs to men, by the averſion they would immediately conceive to it. If it be a good office to diſplay their *Falſe* to their view, it muſt be done imperceptibly, and by degrees, in ſuch a manner as may give them an opportunity of being ſenſible of it themſelves, and willing to own it.

Man is jealous of his *Liberty*. He rejects what you would convince him of in quality of *Doctor* or *Moraliſt*; but when he is witneſs of the ingenuous confeſſion of one like himſelf, he is convinced by a ſecret ſentiment, without perceiving that he himſelf is in the caſe. He cannot reſiſt the force of Truth, the proofs of which he finds within himſelf.

Theſe perhaps were the Author's reaſons for giving his work ſo *original* a Form inſtead of making it a *regular Treatiſe*.

If, as it has been obſerved, the ſerious Pieces interſperſed through the ſame Book, are penned in a more noble ſtyle, than the familiar

familiar Discourses, the reason for this difference is easily assign'd *. The serious pieces are of a kind suitable enough to that of the *Letters:* They are so many *short draughts of the ways by which Truth manifests itself to man.* Here every thing ought to be noble and worthy of the subject. Here the ironical strain would be unseasonable: In the familiar Discourses, it is perfectly in its place: the *False* does not deserve to be attacked gravely; it is most effectually exposed, when imitated or ridiculed.

This, I confess, may be more offensive to such as shall see themselves in the picture whether they will or not. And who knows but this may be the secret cause why some persons are displeased at the too frequent digressions which interrupt the thread of the Discourse? † In reality, others have considered them in a different light: this pretended Irregularity seems to them not only a beauty, but even an opportunity for unfolding *Truths.*

You

* It would be ridiculous to write familiar Discourses in the same style with metaphysical Dissertations. All we expect in the former is that they be natural, easy and unaffected; and that each Character be supported. It was once a commendation to say *a Man spoke like a Book.* Now it is a ridicule; and Men even value themselves on *writing as they speak.* Much more then, ought we to speak as we speak in familiar Discourse, especially in a Walk.

† Digressions are so natural in Conversation, that they cannot be banished from thence, without giving it an air of Restraint and Pedantry, insupportable to Persons of a certain taste.

You will now allow, Sir, that it is no eaſy matter to judge to which of thoſe two works it is proper to give the *Prize:* and, that if ſome, without heſitation, beſtow it on the *Letters*; they do not perhaps thoroughly enquire into the Cauſe of the Judgment they pronounce.

For my part, I ſhould be tempted to think that even the *Difference* between theſe *two Works*, might concur to form ſomething *complete* in the whole.

THE

THE

SEQUEL

OF THE

FOURTEEN LETTERS;

Concerning the STATE of SOULS
ſeparated from their BODIES.

BEING

An ANSWER to a Book, Entitled,

An ENQUIRY into ORIGENISM.

By Mr. Profeſſor *R*——

ADVERTISEMENT

Concerning the following LETTERS.

IT appears from the first of these Letters, that there was at first no design of making a formal Reply. Several who have read the Book written by Mr. Professor *R*..... have observed that it doth not weaken the Foundation of the System of a *Restoration*.

In reality, the strongest blow that Gentleman gives it, has no tendency to shew the *False* of it. He begins with bewailing the iniquity of the times, in which men dare publish a Doctrine calculated for corrupting *Morals*, for seducing the World, and giving a free course to all kinds of disorders. He proves this by Examples.

He supposes two Men, a Miser and a Courtier; "one of them resolved to amass large "Sums at any rate: the other as violently "bent on making his way to Honours. Neither of them can gain his End without be- "ing guilty of Injustice, and Perfidy. The "prospect of eternal Torments would be "useful in stopping their pursuits. Remove "this restraint, be assured, says Mr. *R*..... "they would immediately run headlong into "all Crimes necessary for succeeding in their "Designs. *Page* 25.

I leave it to any one's judgment whether these examples are good proofs in the Case.

I ſhould imagine, on that foot, that Perfidy, Violence, and all ſorts of Diſorders which diſturb Society, muſt be baniſhed, wherever the opinion of a miſerable Eternity is received *. I ſhould imagine, for the ſame reaſon, that if there be a corner of the World, where this *Reſtraint*, this motive to the fear of GOD, is taken away, there muſt we find that Diſorder, that *horrible Confuſion*, mentioned by Mr. Profeſſor. I ſhould farther imagine that, if there are any particular men ſcatter'd through different Countries, who have thrown off this ſo powerful reſtraint, ſuch men muſt be diſtinguiſhable by the Irregularity of their Morals.

I would fain know, however, what is the reaſon, why we ſee ſo many Gentlemen of the black Robe, that formidable Body, called Miniſters of *Juſtice*, that endleſs train of *Proceedings*, that multitude of men, who ſubſiſt only on the Injuſtice done by one private perſon to another; I would fain know, I ſay, why we ſee theſe in Countries where this reſtraint is generally admitted. How ſhall we account for this?

We have here a *Miſer*, and a *Courtier*, whoſe Injuſtice and Perfidy have here been laid open by means of this *Body* of *Juſtice*. Were theſe two men become *Origeniſts?* Had they been ſeduced by that *deceitful Language*, which

* Every one ſees, that this Expreſſion is ſomewhat extravagant; but it is ſuitable to Mr. Profeſſor's Suppoſition.

which Mr. *R* . . . . . compares to that of the *Devil?* By no means. They were very zealous for all the points of the Religion of their Ancestors; eternal Damnation being one Article of it, they had no thoughts of renouncing it.

I set this Example in opposition to that advanced by Mr. *R* . . . . . and desire the Paradox may be explain'd.

If Mr. Professor answers, that Examples, founded on Suppositions are not *conclusive*, I grant it. But then he must likewise allow that the Examples by him proposed are not *conclusive*; and that the whole first Chapter, which proceeds on such Suppositions, is not more *conclusive*.

It has been matter of surprize, that he should begin his confutation in this manner. It was naturally expected, he should first have examined whether the System of the *Restoration* is well or ill grounded: That after this enquiry, he should have set forth the consequences which necessarily result from it. But he takes a contrary method. He begins with the *Consequences*; * Consequences, which he founds on the Example here produced, and other

* There are indeed some Opinions, the Principles of which are sufficiently overthrown by a bare Enumeration of the Consequences; but then the Consequences must be evident and unavoidable. In this case, the matter is quite contrary: Mr. *R* . . . . . supposes Consequences, which are denied; and which are so far from being inevitable, that they are proved false by the Event.

equivalent Suppoſitions. From them he concludes that thoſe Conſequences are pernicious: that they are calculated only for throwing men into a falſe Security and Licentiouſneſs.

This way of treating a Subject is, however, of ſome uſe in the caſe before us. The Reader, who, at the firſt glance, ſees the pernicious effects, which the doctrine of a *Reſtoration* muſt neceſſarily produce, the *horrible Confuſion* which would proceed from it, begins to be terrified.—He is already more than convinced of the falſhood of this Doctrine: he has no need to know any more of it, or read the remainder of the book; or, in ſhort, if he does read it, it is in this firſt point of view, which he carries with him to the end, and which helps him to diſcover Demonſtrations in every Page of the ſame Book.

It is not anſwered in the ſame manner. The examination of the Conſequences, which muſt flow from either Syſtem, is reſerved to the Concluſion.

Firſt, It is enquired, whether the Syſtem of a *Reſtoration* is grounded on *Truth*, on *weighty Reaſons* or on bare *Conjectures*, as Mr. *R*..... pretends.

Secondly, It is enquired whether the Scripture *authorizes*, or *oppoſes* this Syſtem. In this enquiry, a Rule is employ'd, which Mr. *R*..... himſelf propoſes. The Texts of Scripture which ſeem either *for* or *againſt* it, are

are revived. Hence it appears that the Expreſſions on both ſides are almoſt equivalent; and that the Scale ſtill hangs even.

Thirdly, It is enquired whether any thing can be found that may give *weight* to the *Expreſſions:* whether there are not ſome *Truths*, which are *independent* on *Terms*, and may thus help us to the ſenſe of them.

The fourth enquiry is, what thoſe *Truths* may be: and whether all men are obliged to receive them. The laſt Queſtion is reſolved in the *affirmative*. This *Meaſure* therefore is uſed for explaining the ſenſe of ſuch expreſſions as ſeem contradictory.

Laſtly, The Conſequences reſulting from this Syſtem, are examined. It is demonſtrated, that the Opinion of a *miſerable Eternity* is better calculated for throwing men into Remiſſneſs, than that of a *Reſtoration*.

All that remains is to know whether this be well demonſtrated or not. The Reader muſt judge of that.

This being done, an Anſwer is given to an Objection, taken out of the Profeſſor's Treatiſes, *viz. That it is not our buſineſs to ſet bounds to the divine Juſtice, or determine what would be juſt or unjuſt in* GOD: *that we ought to lay our Finger on our Mouth*, &c. This is the Subject of the fourth Letter, and at the ſame time concludes the Anſwer to the Profeſſor's Book.

The Reader will find other Letters after that, which bear no relation to this Anſwer, though written on Subjects but little different.

He will obſerve that ſeveral parts of Mr. Profeſſor's Treatiſe are paſſed by without any direct Anſwers. The Author of the *Letters* propoſed only to defend the Syſtem of a *Reſtoration*; for which reaſon, he has attempted only to parry the *Blows* levelled at it. No notice is taken of ſuch as are ſtruck in the air, or fall ſhort of the mark. Inſiſting on them would have been attacking Mr. *R*..... which was not the deſign of theſe Letters.

Here it will be proper to give an example of what I am ſaying, otherwiſe it may be thought that this is only an Evaſion, for avoiding an Anſwer to the whole.

" The Letter-Writer, ſays Mr. *R*..... " takes his firſt Proof from the Incarnation " of JESUS CHRIST; *He* thinks it of " great force, if ever ſo little *attended to. By* " *that he enobles all human Nature, and becomes* " *the Brother of all Men. This Idea alone* " *might privilege us to preſume that not one* " *of thoſe Men, whoſe Nature the Son of* GOD " *has aſſumed, will periſh eternally.*" To which Mr. *R*..... anſwers thus: " For " my part, I think this Reaſon very weak. " JESUS CHRIST was made Man: He " is become the Brother of all Men; there- " fore he will ſave them all. Were not the " *Levites* Brethren to the Children of *Iſrael*; and

" and yet, when, after the affair of the gol-
" den Calf, *Exod.* xxxii. 26, 28. *Moses* cri-
" ed at the door of the Camp, *Who is on the*
" *Lord's side? let him come to me?* they left
" their idolatrous Brethren, and went to him;
" and when he had commanded them, in the
" name of God, to take their Swords, go
" through the Camp, and kill each man his
" Brother, his Friend and his Neighbour,
" they immediately set out, executed his or-
" ders without mercy, and killed three thou-
" sand Men. An Action very extraordinary,
" and mysterious*, which shews that JESUS
" CHRIST, the true High-Priest of the
" World, will likewise have a Sword for
" punishing such of his unworthy Brethren
" with death, as dishonour their heavenly Fa-
" ther by their Sins."

Let the Reader judge whether this Article has passed unobserved for want of a proper answer, and whether this, and others of the same sort, are not what we call *Blows in the air*. I could produce others of the like nature, were I not afraid of swelling this *Advertisement*, by copying whole Pages. I shall confine myself to one more.

" We know and teach, says Mr. *R*....,
" as well as these Gentlemen, that in GOD

* This Action doth not make it appear that JESUS CHRIST must punish his Brethren with eternal Death. Beside that an Action of the *Levites* is no Rule for his Conduct; the Death they inflicted on their Brethren and eternal Damnation are two different things.

" is neither Anger, Fury, or any Paſſion like " thoſe of Men; but then we ſay that *Juſtice* " is in GOD a conſtant Will of rendering " every one his due; *Good* to him who does " Good; *Evil* to him who does Evil.

Is this to be reckon'd a *Stroke in the air?* That would be ſaying too little. It falls directly on the perſon who ſtrikes. It proves exactly what the *Letters* lay down concerning *perfect Equity*, which proportions the *Puniſhment* to the *Crime*. I do not find in it the leaſt trace of eternal Miſery.

The Reader will obſerve others, that prove no more than this; and that no injury is done to the Author, by declining the conſideration of them.

I come now to ſay one word to the Preface. On reading it a man would not ſuſpect that Mr. *R*..... deſigned to confute one ſingle work; he ſeems to attack ſeveral Authors at once; one would not imagine his aim directed at the Book of *Letters*, till he tells us ſo.

" It is my opinion, ſays he, that we ought " to let theſe zealous Doctors ſee that we " know, better than they do, how to practiſe " the Rules of the Goſpel-Morality: that " we know how to render *Good* for *Evil*, " *Bleſſing* for *Curſing*, and anſwer thoſe, who " injure us with *Moderation*. I am ſatisfied " I have done ſo in this piece. *Page* 11.

Any one who reads this, without peruſing the Book of *Letters*, will be full of Indignation againſt

againſt an Author who ſhould give occaſion to ſuch a return. Nor would he have leſs reaſon to admire the *Moderation* of Mr. *R*..... who anſwers theſe Invectives only with *Bleſſings*. To confirm him in this, he need only confront the two works one with the other.

The Article preceeding that laſt extracted, doth not give ſo favourable an Idea of this *Moderation*. It is grounded on a *Suppoſition*; and it doth not appear at whom it is levelled.

"Men, ſays Mr. *R*..... who though "mere upſtarts, are capable of inſulting and "abuſing their Antagoniſts in words, would "be very capable of making them feel the "violence of their Choler by effects, if they "had them in their power; eſpecially as "they already look on them with a ſovereign "contempt, as Wretches almoſt deſtined to be "Victims of the Devil." *Has this any relation to the work which Mr. *R*..... undertakes to confute?

Let us put a more favourable Conſtruction on Mr. Profeſſor's Intentions. He does not mean, that the Letters contain foul Language, or Invectives †. A Man muſt be a great Ar-

* Has a work whoſe viſible Characteriſtic is univerſal Benevolence for all Mankind, any Connexion with the ſovereign Contempt, which Mr. *R*..... ſuppoſes?

† Mr. *R*—— elſewhere ſays, "He is obliged in Juſ"tice to the Author of the *Letters*, to own, that he "ſhews a great deal of Moderation." This Teſtimony, had it been placed here, might have ſerved as a Lenitive. The Reader would then have underſtood, that ſuch Suppoſitions or Accuſations do not in the leaſt affect the Author.

tist to find any thing of that nature in them. He certainly had some other Writers in view, while he was writing his Preface. It is surprizing he should add, that *his Answer is penned with Moderation.*

He probably considers all who do not admit of the Doctrine of a miserable Eternity, as a Body so closely united, that each Member of it is answerable for what the rest of them have published *.

When Mr. *R*—— is informed that it is he that brought our Author acquainted with † the Works he mentions; Works which till then he had never heard speak of; he will be sensible, that these two are so many *Blows in the Air.*

An Answer *to Mr.* R----'s Preliminary Reflections.

I Have observed an Article, which serves as an *Exordium* to the *Enquiry into Origenism*; on which it may not be amiss to say a word or two.

Mr. *R*—— sets out with reminding his Readers of the Menace of Death pronounced by GOD to *Adam* and *Eve*, if they should eat

* This is just as if a Writer, who doth not hold the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, ought to be answerable for whatever may be written by others, who reject that Article.

† The Works of Dr. *Peterstein*, and other *German* and *English* Writers.

eat of the forbidden Fruit; and the Lye given him by the Devil, when he ſaid, *You ſhall not ſurely die.* page 16. He afterwards compares the Doctrine of a *Reſtoration* to this diabolical Language: "Had not I reaſon to "ſay, *concludes he*, that the Doctrine of thoſe "Gentlemen very much reſembles the ſe-"ducing Language of the Devil, *you ſhall* "*not ſurely die?*" page 48.

Nothing could give more weight to Mr. Profeſſor's Confutation, than this Compariſon. It might produce all the Prejudice he could wiſh againſt the Doctrine of a *Reſtoration.* But the misfortune is, that it is not juſt.

You ſhall not ſurely die; that is, in the Caſe in queſtion, *No ill ſhall befall you.* Doth this affect the Author of the Letters? This Queſtion is ſufficiently anſwered, by the Deſcription he gives us of *Hell*, in his eleventh Letter.

But ſays Mr. *R*—— *You ſuppoſe thoſe Torments will have an end.* What a ſtrange Suppoſition is this!

Tell a Man, who is paſſionately fond of Gain, that if he attains his End by Acts of *Injuſtice*, he ſhall be tortured with the *Stone*, or the *Rack*, a hundred Years; is this telling him, *No ill ſhall befall him?*

But ſays Mr. *R*—— "If Men were per-"ſuaded, that, after ſome time of ſuffering, "they ſhall be ſaved, *&c.*" page 23. The

Term *some time* is *indefinite*. In the common way of speaking, it stands for a small number of Years. Doth the Author of the Letters speak of *Hell* under that Idea? Doth he determine the Number? After a Description of that *Hell*, he concludes thus:

" In short, it may even be considered as " an eternal Fire, or an Eternity of Punish- " ments, in regard to what the Damned will " undoubtedly feel in it; for we have abun- " dant reason to believe, that, since the " Scripture represents the Duration of their " Pains as an Eternity, that Duration will " appear such to them, not only by the num- " ber of Years and Ages, which it will swal- " low up, but also because the least Portion " of Time will appear to them an Eternity." Letter XI.

Doth this Language bear much Resemblance to that with which Mr. *R* —— compares it, *You shall not surely die?*

Perhaps Mr. *R* —— had not observed this Passage in the *Letters*; and the Idea of a *Hell*, which will have an end, presented to his Mind only a small number of Years. I should have supposed this, had not he himself cleared up the Doubt. He explains himself positively on what he understands by the Words, *some time*. The Term, in regard of some, signifies a *thousand* Years, in regard to others, *two thousand*, *seven thousand*, or *fifty thousand* Years. page 115. This is his Idea of that *Hell*,

Hell, which tends to lull Men into Security.

The Paſſage quoted from the *Letters*, mentions only *ſome Ages*; and *burning ſome Ages*, did not ſeem to the Author a ſmall Matter.

Mr. *R* —— however is not terrified at all this; he begins* with *thouſands* of Years, and goes on to *fifty thouſand*. Is *burning* fifty thouſand Years any thing, when compared to *Eternity?* As ſoon as you ſuppoſe an *End* to the *Torments*, you deſtroy all *Fear*; you lull Men to ſleep by that ſeducing Aſſurance, *You ſhall not ſurely die.*

The Author the *Letters*, conſidering the State of thoſe who had rebelled before the Time of *Noah*, and who, according to St. *Peter*, were even in his days detained in the infernal Priſon, thought that Idea ſo terrible, that when he mentioned the ſame Paſſage, he dared not venture on this Remark: ſo that, whenever he ſpeaks of *Hell*, he doth meddle with its *Duration.*

But, in ſhort, ſince Mr. *R* —— is of opinion, that the number of *fifty thouſand* Years does not come up to the Idea of the Puniſhment which the Damned deſerve; if, in order to engage him to allow an *End* of them, it be neceſſary to grant him a much longer Term, we would do it, without the leaſt heſitation. Inſtead of fifty thouſand, then,

* In reality, when a Man is once accuſtomed to view an Eternity without End, he muſt reckon fifty thouſand Years but a ſmall matter.

then, he may put a hundred thousand, two hundred thousand; if that is not sufficient, let him make them up four hundred thousand, a *Million*; in fine, he may double the Number, provided he does but allow an *End*, we will grant him what Number he pleases; at least, if we must necessarily chuse between that *Number* and *Duration without End.*

Mr. *R*— having proved, that the Doctrine of a *Restoration* may do much harm, contents himself with calling it an *useless* and *curious Question*; * which may very well be let alone. For this he appeals to the Author of the Letters.

" Once more, *says he*, this is a Question " of more Curiosity than real Use. For this " I appeal to the Author of the *Letters* him- " self, who very well observes in his Preface, " that *Questions of mere Curiosity have no* " *Tendency: they are of no use, either in Spe-* " *culation*

* This now is the last shift for not admitting a Truth too evident. Let us not meddle with it; it is a curious Question, which we are under no necessity of enquiring into or determining. This being supposed, the Partisans of a *miserable Eternity* would be obliged to desist; for, in short, the Question is not less curious on the Affirmative, than on the Negative Side. The Affirmative is rather more bold; and it is well known, that he who affirms, ought to have more Proofs than he who denies. It is evident therefore, that Mr. *R*———'s Reproach must fall on those who have, for so many Ages, affirmed the Eternity of *Hell.*

If it be objected, that the Affirmative is the same in regard to the *Restoration*; I answer, that there is a wide

" *culation or Practice. Far from giving any* " *Light into the Obscurities or seeming Con-* " *tradictions in Religion, they produce new* " *ones.*" page 31.

Doth Mr. *R*——— imagine, that the Author of the *Letters* has given the character of what he calls *curious Questions*, in order to conclude that of the *Restoration* one of that kind? It is extremely probable that he designed the quite contrary, as is evident from the Words immediately following those quoted by Mr. *R* ——.

" It might here be said, that the Truths " contained in these *Letters*, are of use both " in Theory and Practice, were it not more " proper to leave that to the Reader's own " Judgment."

The Author supposed he had established it in his sixth, thirteenth, and fourteenth Letters;

wide difference between affirming, that a thing will return to its former Condition, and affirming, that it will be eternally in a violent State, for which it was not created.

The *Restoration* supposes nothing new, nothing foreign to the Nature of either God or Man; whereas Misery without End is equally foreign to both, and directly contrary to the Design of the Creator. Even when God inflicts Punishment in this World, he calls it his *strange Work, his strange Act*. Isaiah xxviii. 21. Let any one judge now on which side the Affirmative is most bold; on theirs who suppose this *strange Work* will have an end, or on theirs who maintain it will never cease.

ters; *and every Reader, who has Eyes, may judge whether he has done this by good Proofs or not. Mr. *R*——, however, appeals to the Author himself, on this head.

Mr. Professor's Conclusion would have had more weight, if it had been preceded by an *exact* † *Confutation* of the Letters last mentioned.

A LETTER *concerning the Book entitled,* An Enquiry into *Origenism.*

SIR,

I Have read the little Treatise which you was pleased to send me, and lent it to the Author of the fourteen Letters. As soon as I receive his Answer, I will communicate it to you.

You

* It is demonstrated in those three Letters, that the Doctrine of a *Restoration* justifies the Conduct of Providence; that it shews the Harmony of the Divine Attributes; that it clears up the Obscurities and seeming Contradictions in Religion; that it puts an end to the Differences among Divines; that it includes stronger and more efficacious Motives for rendering Men virtuous, than the contrary System. The contrary of this ought to be proved, before it is called a *curious Question.*

† When an Author designs to conclude against a Doctrine, which he finds established by Proofs, whether such Proofs are substantial or not, he is always obliged to overthrow them, before he draws his Conclusion. If this is not done, he runs the hazard of concluding alone.

You aſk me, Sir, Whether this piece of Criticiſm is not ſtrong enough to efface the Impreſſion thoſe Letters had made on me. Not entirely; for I think Mr. *R*—— has not yet ſhook the Principles of the Work which he undertakes to confute. He has certainly reſerved his beſt Proofs for the ſecond Volume, which he gives us hopes to expect; where he will follow his Author ſtep by ſtep, and purſue him into his laſt Retrenchments. He will be the more ſtrongly moved to the Execution of that Deſign, as a ſecond Edition of the *fourteen Letters* is lately publiſhed, with the Addition of *Notes*, and ſome other new Pieces, which may deſerve a Confutation.

I think that, if Mr. *R*—— was diſpoſed to make ſhort work of the matter, and would confine himſelf to the Overthrow of the Principles laid down in theſe new Diſſertations, he would bring the whole Work to the ground, by that ſingle Stroke. Among theſe new Pieces, I reckon an additional Letter concerning a *Deiſt*, which Mr. *R*—— has ſeen, but not confuted. It contains a ſort of *Analyſis* of the whole Syſtem, and lays down the Idea of GOD, as the Baſis of all Religion.

I am ſo eaſily diſabuſed, that when I ſee the Chain or Connection, which makes the whole Strength of that Piece, entirely overthrown, I ſhall require no farther Confutation, but look on the Author as vanquiſhed. On that foot, Mr. *R*—— will gain the Victory at

a-

a small Expence; and I think it would not be improper to propose that Expedient to him.

LETTER I. *from the Author of the fourteen Letters, concerning a Book entitled,* An Enquiry into *Origenism.*

SIR,

YOU make me a Proposal in Mr. *N*—'s Name, of answering the Critic on the fourteen *Letters*. Should I undertake that Task, I ought to begin with returning the Civilities shown by Mr. *R*——— to an anonymous Author, whom he is under no manner of Obligation to treat so tenderly. But, as those obliging Expressions ought to give me room to doubt of their being directed to me, I think I ought to decline the said Return. Besides, I think Mr. *R*—— doth not by his Book afford sufficient Matter for an Answer in form; since he has attacked only the Surface of the Work, and not attempted to sap the Foundation of it *.

He does indeed set out with rendering the whole

* The System of a *Restoration* is founded on *immutable Truths*; to which Mr. *R*———opposes only some *Expressions* of Scripture. In return, *Expressions* not less formal are objected to him. Mr. *R*——is therefore still obliged to prove a *miserable Eternity* by *immutable Truths*, more *evident* than those on which the *Restoration* is established.

whole Syſtem ſuſpected, by charging it with *Origeniſm*; and, which is more, with favouring *Pietiſm*. This is ſufficient for throwing a Miſt over the moſt palpable Truths. At leaſt it has its effect on the Vulgar; it is a compendious way of diſcrediting a Work, and will paſs on great numbers of Readers for a Demonſtration. The *Roman Catholick* Doctors are ſenſible of the effect the Term *Heretic* produces on the Minds of Men. Nor has that of *Pietiſt* leſs force with the generality of Proteſtants?

One of the moſt ſingular Paſſages in the Book under conſideration, is this:

" I perceive, *ſays our Author*, that he here " and there copies Dr. *Peterſein*, word for " word." In return to this Remark, I can aſſure him, I never read one word of that Gentleman's Writings.

I ſay the ſame in regard to the *Engliſh* Author, who, as Mr. *R*——— tells his Readers, has written a Treatiſe on this Subject, under the Title of *The New Goſpel, from which the* Origeniſts *have taken the Doctrine of the* Reſtoration. page 26. I am obliged to our Author for this Information.

The firſt Edition of the Letters was in the Preſs, when I heard of a Piece written by Dr. *Burnet* *, in favour of a *Reſtoration*. I am

Note of the Tranſlator.

* In the Original I find a Note, which tells us this was a Son of the famous *Burnet*, Biſhop of *Salisbury*, whoſe Book was printed in 1731. Here is a double Miſtake.

am ſurprized it has eſcaped Mr. Profeſſor's knowledge. Here would be a new Adverſary for him to engage, and one worthy of his Pen. But it happens unluckily, that the Epithet of *Pietiſt* would be of no ſervice to him, againſt that Gentleman. He ſpeaks with an Aſſurance which would ſtartle Mr. *R*———; *Be aſſured*, ſays he, *that the Time will come, when the Doctrine of* eternal Torments *will not be leſs odious than that of* Tranſubſtantiation *is at preſent among the Proteſtants.*

I know not, ſays the ſame Writer, *how the Doctrine of* eternal Torments *becomes ſo agreeable to certain ſevere and cruel Divines, who will not even bear that this Point ſhould be examined.* Ibid.

What do you think, Sir, of Mr. Profeſſor's Diſcourſe on the Novelty of this Opinion?

" If, *ſays he*, the univerſal Church could " ſubſiſt without this Belief for above fifteen " Centuries, might it not do ſo after that " time?" page 33. " I ſhould think, *ſays* " *he in another place*, that the *Origeniſts* ought " to ſhew a Reſpect for the Judgment of " the univerſal Church." page 32.

This

Miſtake. The Book is intitled, *De Statu Mortuorum & Reſurgentium*; and was penned by Dr. *Thomas Burnet* of the *Charter-houſe*. It was printed many Years before the Time here ſpecified; but little known in the World till it was tranſlated by Mr. *Earbury*, with Notes in oppoſition to the Doctrine of it. But few Copies of it were to be found; and it appears from the Preface, that the Author never deſigned it ſhould come into many hands.

This Language sounds something like Infallibility, and is more suitable to the Principles of a *Roman Catholick*, than to those of Protestants. What will be the Consequence? That when Evidence presents itself to the Mind, before we acquiesce, we ought to enquire what the universal Church has pronounced.

Mr. *N*—— will not perhaps own, that the Criticism on the fourteen *Letters*, has not shaken the Principles of them. I could easily demonstrate the Matter to his Satisfaction.

In those Letters, *immutable Truths* are laid down, as the Rule by which we may discover the Sense of the obscure, figurative, and ambiguous Expressions, with which the Scripture abounds. To this it is added, that when we meet with *Contradictions*, those Expressions only are to be taken *literally*, which agree with such *Truths*. An Enquiry is then made, whether the Idea we entertain of the *Divine Goodness*, *Wisdom*, and even *Justice*, can be compatible with the Idea of an Eternal Damnation. This is what Mr. *R*—— ought to have proved.

He should have shewn that infinite *Goodness* can, without contradicting itself, consent to the Eternal Torments of an Infinity of Creatures: that Sovereign *Justice* requires it: and that in so doing it agrees with *Goodness*. Had he done this, he wou'd have begun to shake the whole System. Let us now see, how he gets clear of the matter.

" The Author of the Letters, says Mr. " *R*——

" *R*—— undertakes to prove that the *Non-*
" *Eternity* of Hell is grounded on thoſe im-
" mutable Truths, which are the Baſis of all
" Religion. He draws his Argument from
" the *Wiſdom*, *Juſtice* and *Goodneſs* of GOD.
" Excellent Logic! Therefore the Torments
" of Hell will not be Eternal*."

This now is a compendious way of confuting an Argument. I leave the Reader to judge whether the following Pages contain any thing more ſolid.

" The Author of the Letters, ſays Mr.
" *R*——— finiſhes his Reflections with this
" pathetical Exclamation: *Can it be conceived*
" *that the Juſtice of GOD condemns Millions*
" *of Creatures, form'd after his own Image,*
" *to horrible Miſery and that for ever?* † *What*
" *is more unjuſt, and more contrary to the de-*
" *ſign of the Creator, than that an Infinity of*
" *Creatures ſhould hate him for ever? I repeat*
" *it*

* Nothing is more proper for obſcuring a Truth, than making the Concluſion immediately follow a Propoſition which is not explained. This however, is of a Nature ſo evident, that it may even bear this Irregularity. Let us confront this Logic with that of Mr. *R*——.

GOD is *wiſe*, *juſt* and *good*; therefore the Torments of the Damned *will not be Eternal*. — GOD is *wiſe*, *juſt* and *good*; therefore the Torments of the Damned *will be Eternal*. I deſire to know which concludes beſt.

† He has ſuppreſſed the following Period. *But why do I ſay, to horrible Miſery? We ought to add, to a Hatred of* GOD, *to Rage, to Deſpair, to Blaſphemy for all Eternity. May it not be ſaid, on the contrary, that the chief Employment of this Sovereign* Juſtice, *is to render juſt* what is *unjuſt*, and make *ſtrait* what is *crooked? What is more unjuſt*, &c.

" *it once more*; *Can Sovereign Juſtice will In-*
" *juſtice, or permit it to ſubſiſt through all E-*
" *ternity?*"

This Interrogatory is ſomewhat ſtrong, and therefore Mr. *R*——, *though he had ſeveral things to ſay on that Head, ſuppreſſes them, to make ſhort.*

" I ſhall content myſelf at preſent, ſays he,
" with ſaying, I ſhould not care to ſpeak in
" ſo high a ſtrain.—— When we are talking
" of the adorable Majeſty of the great GOD,
" is it the Buſineſs of poor Mortals like us,
" to pretend to ſet bounds to the * Rights
" of the ſupreme Juſtice of the Judge of the
" whole Earth?" *Page* 71.

If this is not entirely ſatisfactory, it is at leaſt a way for getting out of a ſcrape.

Soon after Mr. *R*—— meets with the ſolution, which he did not ſee at firſt.

" If the Juſtice of GOD, adds he, did not
" allow him to puniſh the Wicked with Eter-
" nal Torments, wou'd his Wiſdom have al-
" low'd him to threaten them with them?"

This Argument wou'd admit of no Reply, did it not ſuppoſe the very thing in diſpute†.

Mr.

* Unleſs by the Term *Juſtice*, Mr. *R*—— means *Revenge*, the Expreſſion of ſetting bounds to Juſtice is improper. We are ſpeaking of Revenge without bounds. See what is ſaid on that Subject in the third Letter, *viz.* that the Infinity of Juſtice conſiſts not in puniſhing *ad infinitum*, but in being infinitely equitable.

† The Queſtion, is whether the Terms *Eternity*, and *for ever*, ought always to ſignify a Duration without *End?*

Mr. *R*—— wou'd have told us, this in the Schools is called beginning the queſtion.

But now we are ſpeaking of the *Schools*, what do you think, Sir, of the manner, in which Mr. *R*—— ridicules the Argument brought for reconciling the *Particulariſts* and *Univerſaliſts*?

" The Author of the Letters, according " to him, has borrow'd it from Dr. *Peterſein*, " (whom he never read) and it is a matter " of juſt ſurprize that that Doctor, who was a " Man of Letters, ſhould fall into a way of " Reaſoning ſo groſly faulty." *Page* 75.

Mr. *R*——, before he produces the Theſes or Arguments which reconcile the difference of the Divines, makes this Remark, *This is admirable, but is it equally ſolid? Hear what follows, and judge for yourſelf.* One wou'd expect he is going to demonſtrate the *Falſe* of it. No ſuch matter. He falls foul on the form, and ſuppoſes ſomewhat ridiculous in it, which others do not diſcover. *This*, ſays he, *without lying, is an admirable way of reaſoning.* This is ſufficient for dazzling the Reader, and diſpenſing with a Categorical Anſwer. *This, without lying*, is an admirable way of clearing his hands of the Affair.

Let us now ſee the *Falſe* of this Argument, wherein conſiſts the ridiculouſneſs of it?

" In this, ſays Mr. *R*——, that their Ad- " verſaries will deny one or the other of the " Premiſes of their Syllogiſm. What do " they drive at? A *Particulariſt* will not ad-

" mit the Minor, nor an *Univerſaliſt* the Ma-
" jor*; thus they are in a fine way toward
" being reconciled." *Page* 74.

This now is the ridiculouſneſs of the Argument; that among a thouſand Perſons, who ſhall read this Work, a certain Number, with the Appellation of Divines, will be determined to maintain their own particular Syſtem to the end. Each of them, being firmly reſolved to make no Conceſſions one to the other, will deny either the *Major* or *Minor*; and conſequently the Concluſion will be null. In this Caſe, I deſire to know who will prove more ridiculous; he that aims at reconciling the Divines, or thoſe very Divines, who are abſolutely reſolved never to agree?

It ſhould be obſerved, that the Diſpute is not here with one Adverſary. No Divine is attacked apart, with a View of making him quit one Opinion, and embrace the contrary †. Nothing like this is intended. Each of them is allow'd his Theſis. All here deſign'd is to make them ſenſible that they are not incompatible, that one of the Parties is in the right, and the other not in the wrong ‖.

* This is not certain; and the contrary is evident from Experience. All the Divines have not taken an Oath, to adhere ſo firmly to their Opinions, as Mr. *R*—— ſuppoſes; there are ſome *Univerſaliſts*, who have made no difficulty of allowing the *Major*, without giving up the *Minor*.

† It is but too common a Practice in the Schools, to argue with this View only.

‖ For Example, *The Will of* GOD *is efficacious.*

GOD

But, says Mr. *R*——, in order to make what we call in the Schools an Argument *ad hominem, the Person, against whom we dispute, ought to be convinced of the Principles of the Argument.*

No doubt of it, when we dispute against *Peter* or *John*. To argue against such or such a particular Person, on Principles which he doth not admit, would be fighting with the Air. But the matter is quite otherwise in the present Case *; the Argument is not address'd to Divines *alone*, much less Divines of one *Party only*; but to every Man capable of distinguishing the *True* of the *Principles* of the whole Work; and consequently of admitting the Propositions which result from them.

Another Remark, which Mr. *R*—— has certainly not made, and which would have made the ridiculousness he sees, disappear, is, that there was no design of establishing the System of a *Restoration* on the different Opinions of Divines. It is founded on a more *invariable Basis*; as appears from the five first Letters. The Propositions already proved

GOD *wills that all Men should be saved.* Here now are two Propositions by no means incompatible, though they have been considered as such, for so many Ages.

* A Man, who proposes an Argument to any Reader indifferently, is well assured before-hand that all will not admit his Principles. It is sufficient for him, that he advances only such as are well-grounded, and such as every equitable and intelligent Reader must be obliged to allow.

ed for * reconciling the difference, which has subsisted so many Ages among Divines, are employ'd only in the *dernier resort.*

This is indeed a very bold Attempt, and such as never was thought of in the Schools. Mr. *R*—— therefore observes, that *the Glory of this Work was reserved for the* Origenists. They will certainly value themselves on it, even though they proceeded against all Scholastic Rules. They are persuaded, however, that had Mr. *R*—— sooner perceived the Design and Spirit of this Argument, he wou'd not have been at the trouble of taxing it with *wretched Sophistry*, and then concluding with, "See what happens to Persons, wedded to "some new Opinion. All Proofs † go "down; and the weakest appear to them, "as so many Demonstrations."

Is there any farther necessity of undertaking to overthrow the pretended Relation, that Mr. *R*—— would find between the Syllogisms, which he puts into the mouth of a *Roman Catholic*, and those in question, *Page* 75, 76. The Invention is curious, as well as the Application he makes of it to the Author of the Letters, which deserves to be quoted in his own Words.

* For Example, *All those for whom* JESUS CHRIST *died, will partake of Salvation.* JESUS CHRIST *tasted Death for all Men.*

These two Propositions are proved in the first Part of the Letters.

† It has been shewn, that the different Theses of Divines, are not laid down in quality of essential Proofs.

" What wou'd our Author think of a " *Roman Catholic*, who ſhould offer him ſuch " Syllogiſms? I am ſatisfied he wou'd ad- " viſe him to purge his Brain with ſome Grains " of *Hellebore*; or at leaſt wou'd not be able " to forbear laughing in his face, and telling " him, you take me for a Simpleton."

It is ſurprizing that ſome, who imagine themſelves equally well acquainted with the Rules of true Logic, do not break out into the ſame Exclamation. But the Sophiſtry of ſuch Syllogiſms has eſcaped their Penetration.

I perceive what I have ſaid bears the Air of an Anſwer. I had at firſt no other View than that of ſatisfying Mr. *N*——, who thought the *Enquiry into Origeniſm* of ſome weight. This ought to be ſufficient for diſabuſing him. But as he may complain that I leave ſeveral Articles ſtill more eſſential behind, I believe they may furniſh me with Matter for a ſecond Letter.

LETTER II.

I Grant, Sir, the Article, in which Mr. *R*—— ſeems ſtrongeſt againſt the *Non-Eternity* of Hell-Torments, is that in which he reviews all the Paſſages of Scripture, that ſpeak of *Eternity*, *the Worm that never dies*, *the Fire which is never quenched.* This may appear to carry the utmoſt force to ſuch as know

know the Scripture, more by *Words* than by *Things*.

This difficulty was obviated in the beginning of the firſt Letter, where it is obſerved that the Scripture abounds with *figurative*, *ambiguous*, and often with ſeemingly *contradictory* Expreſſions. Whence it is inferred, that all cannot be taken *literally*. It is acknowledged, however, that ſome Expreſſions muſt be underſtood literally, as others are to be underſtood with reſtriction. This being ſuppoſed, a Choice and Diſtinction muſt be made in the Senſe given to ſuch or ſuch Expreſſions. This likewiſe is done in one of the Letters; where it is ſaid, *that* Words *can never be the Rule of the* True; *but that the* True *ought to determine the Senſe of* Words: *and that the* True *ought to be eſtabliſhed on fixed Principles, on immutable Truths.* Letter concerning a Deiſt.

We muſt here remember, what was laid down in the firſt Letter concerning the grand Principles of *Eternal* and *Immutable* Truths, which are *independent* of *Expreſſions*, *Figures* and *Parables*, and which we find as it were engraved on the very *Subſtance* of our *Being*; to which the Scripture *bears Teſtimony*, but which *depend* not on the Scripture, becauſe, were it poſſible for that Book to be loſt, we ſhould have no leſs Certainty of them. Of thoſe Truths it has been ſaid that *they are*

not become true by Revelation; but were revealed because they are true. Letter IX.

Mr. *R*——does not pretend to prove the falshood of these Principles.

" The Author of the Letters, says he, lays " down some Principles, which he judges ne- " cessary for a right Explanation of the Scrip- " ture. I cannot do better than imitate his " Example. A first Principle which I here " advance, and which the Author will allow " me, is, that there is no real Contradiction " in the Scripture." Mr. *R*—— seems to forget that this is one of the Principles * most strongly established in the Letters.

" Hence, continues he, I draw this Rule; " that when we meet with some Passages, " which seem to overthrow certain Truths, " proposed in a strong and decisive manner " in other Places, we are to give these Pas- " sages such a Sense, as doth not overthrow " those Truths."

I receive this Rule to a certain Point; but do not hold it to be infallible; that wou'd, at most, be only making certain Expressions yield to others more *strong* and *decisive*; *Words* wou'd still be the Rule of the *True*.

Let us endeavour to make use of this Rule, and see whither it will lead us.

Mr. *R*—— acknowledges, that the Scripture cannot be understood *literally* in an infinity

* *When the Scripture seems to contradict itself in some Places, we are to take literally only what perfectly agrees with the fundamental and inconteſtable Truths.* Letter I.

finity of places: that we must make some Expressions give way to others. Some are proposed to him which seem contradictory, and yet appear equally decisive.

On one hand, we have those of *Eternal Fire*, *for ever*, *always*, *unpardonable Sin*, *Impossibility of Repentance*. I here set down all the Terms which Mr. *R*——— quotes, and the Scripture can afford us on this Subject, the greatest Force of which consists in the *always*, *for ever*, and *Eternity*.

On the other hand, we propose the positive Declarations, that GOD *wills all Men should be saved*: that JESUS CHRIST *tasted Death for all Men*: that *he was raised up from the Earth, to draw all Men to him*: that GOD *doth not keep his Anger for ever*: that *he chideth not eternally*, &c. I pass by an infinity of the same kind, several of which are produced in the Letters.

I now ask Mr. *R*———, on which side the Expressions are most *decisive*. He will undoubtedly say, those which establish the Eternity of Hell. But, I ask him, why they appear so to him? Whether the Words *Eternal* and *for ever*, are no where employed in Scripture, when speaking of things now *ended**. He will be obliged to grant me this; he has already done it in his Book.

"It is true, says he, that the *Greek* and the "*Hebrew* Words, which signify an *Age*, *E-*

"*ternal*,

* St. *Jude* says, that *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* received the Punishment of *Everlasting Fire*, ver. 7.

" *ternal, for ever*, ſometimes ſtand for an *un-*
" *limited* Time, or only for a *long Duration*,
" or all the Time that a certain thing can
" laſt. But, then the ſame Terms frequently
" and moſt commonly ſignify *Eternity* pro-
" perly ſo called *."

Very well. But can an Expreſſion, which ſignifies ſometimes one thing, and ſometimes another, be *deciſive?* It cannot be ſo in both Senſes. We are therefore to determine in which of them it muſt be *deciſive*. Once more, I aſk Mr. *R*—— why he takes *for ever* in the † Senſe of *Eternity*, properly ſo called.

Nor have I leſs right to aſk him, why the innumerable formal Declarations of GOD's *Deſign* to ſave *all Men*, ought to give way to that of everlaſting Fire. He will tell me, as he has ſaid in his Book, it is becauſe the Expreſſion of *all Men* is often uſed for ſignifying *many*, or Perſons of *all Sorts*. I grant it, but even ſuppoſing this, the words *Eternal* and *all Men* being ranked in the ſame Claſs, one of them cannot give place to the other, as Mr. *R*—— pretends. Here

* We every day repeat in our Creed, *I believe in Life Everlaſting*. The Compilers certainly forgot to add, *I believe in Death Everlaſting*. This Omiſſion may, at leaſt, convince us, that they did not look on that Article, as an eſſential Point.

† The following Words are an Inſtance of the uſe of the Term *for ever*, being employed in ſpeaking of Things now ended. *Thus ſaith the Lord*; David *ſhall never want a Man to ſit upon the Throne of* Iſrael. *Neither ſhall the Prieſts and Levites want a Man before me, to offer Burnt-Offerings, and to kindle Meat-Offerings, and to do ſacrifice continually*, Jerem. xxxiii. 17, 18.

Here then are two ſorts of Expreſſions placed in oppoſition one to the other, who ſhall judge which of them ſhall carry the Day? Perhaps, on a bare view of Terms only we ſhall find more and ſtronger in favour of a *Reſtoration* than againſt it. But even granting an Equality, what *Reaſon* ſhall turn the Scale? For, in ſhort, we muſt have recourſe to ſome *Reaſon*, ſince the Expreſſions themſelves will be of *equal Weight*.

Hence it is evident, that the *Rule* propoſed by Mr. *R*—— is inſufficient; that we muſt have recourſe to ſomething more *invariable*, than Expreſſions, how poſitive ſoever they may be ſuppoſed: that, as has been already ſaid, we muſt go back to *fixed Principles* and *immutable Truths*.

This is exactly what was deſigned in the firſt Letter. Mr. *R*—— muſt have miſtaken the meaning of it; or he need not have given himſelf the trouble of turning the following Words into ridicule.

I aſk, ſays the Author of the Letters, *what is the foundation of the Proofs alledged for the ſupport of the Eternity of Torments? Nothing but bare Expreſſions, to the number of three or four, an* Eternity, *a Worm* that never dies, *&c. How are the Proofs of the contrary Opinion ſupported? By the ſame immutable Truths, which are the Baſis of all Religion.*

Mr. *R*—— by ſuppreſſing the latter Interrogatory, which ſerves as an Anſwer to the

former, ſatisfies himſelf with bantering that firſt mention'd.

" Here now, ſays he, is what we call " Wit, and that of the moſt refined ſort, " which is employed in turning things, " which the moſt clear-ſighted imagine they " ſee, to a Senſe quite contrary to what they " ſee. And on what, continues he, is the " Opinion of thoſe Gentlemen grounded?"

The Anſwer was not far off, if Mr. *R*—— had been diſpoſed to ſee it. He might have underſtood from the very Article, which he undertakes to confute, that the Syſtem of eternal Torments is ſupported by *Words*; whereas the contrary Syſtem is founded on *Things*.

All things rightly conſidered, we ſhall be oblig'd to come back to *Things*, to ſimple and clear Ideas, which cannot be ſuſceptible of different Senſes: We ſhall be ſenſible of the inſuperable Difficulties, we ſhall meet with in making *Words* fight with *Words*, independently of the *Grand Principles*, which alone can give them light.

No Principle is ſo *ſimple* and *inconteſtable* as this, GOD is *good*. When we read this in Scripture, we do not receive it as a thing taught us by the Scripture, but as a thing which we knew before. The ſame is to be ſaid of the *Equity* of GOD; the Teſtimony which the Scripture bears of it, gains our Aſſent immediately, a *Yes* or an *It is true*, beyond reply.

What

What doth this *Yes* prove? Do we say *It is true* of a thing of which we have no *Ideas?* It follows then, that we have Ideas of the *Divine Goodneſs* and *Equity*, independently of what the Scripture teſtifies of them; this is undoubted.

I aſk, when any one confirms a thing to us, which we knew before, or unfolds the Conſequences of things whoſe Principles were known to us, do we pretend to look for any Figure in the Words uſed? Do we make any difficulty of underſtanding them in a literal Senſe?

When in the Scripture we read this expreſs Declaration, GOD *wills that all Men ſhould be ſaved*, is this any thing more than a Confirmation of that Principle, GOD *is good*; or, at leaſt, a very natural Conſequence from it?

Let us now ſee what *Reaſon* could hinder us from receiving thoſe Words in their whole Extent, in the firſt ſenſe they preſent to the Mind. Do we think ſuch a Deſign unworthy of GOD? Would not the very Idea we entertain of his *Goodneſs* dictate it to us? And doth not the Teſtimony, which confirms it, carry an infinite Conſolation for every one capable of feeling an impreſſion? Doth it not find in him that *Yes*, that *It is true*, which leaves no doubt.

Again, I aſk, when we read in the Scripture, that Men created after the Image of GOD, ſhall ſuffer in a burning Lake to all Eternity, do we find in ourſelves any *Notion*,

any *Principles*, of which a *miſerable Eternity* can be the *Conſequence?* As we take a nearer view of it, do we feel that Aſſent, that *It is true, this is juſt*, which Truth forces from us, even in ſpite of ourſelves?

The Objection that might be made, that our Intereſt is much more concerned in acquieſcing in the firſt Opinion, than to the laſt, is of no weight.

I ſuppoſe a Man ſecure of his own Salvation, and whoſe private Intereſt is quite out of the queſtion; I aſk, whether ſuch a Perſon could ſeriouſly pronounce in favour of a miſerable Eternity, without ſhocking every Notion within him. I ſpeak here of all ſuch as have not made the Prejudices of Infancy the Foundation of their Judgments. I cannot believe they would eſpouſe what Mr. *R*— advances concerning the Light of Nature.

" All we can affirm with certainty, ſays he, " is, That the Light of Nature ſeems ra- " ther to declare for the Eternity of Hell, " than againſt it; becauſe it tells us that " Virtue ought to be rewarded, and Vice pu- " niſh'd." *page* 37.

Very well; but doth it ſuggeſt to us that this Puniſhment ought to be *eternal?* It would be an Affront to the Reader to undertake the Confutation of this Theſis. The ſame Light of Nature, if not ſtifled, will do the buſineſs better than the ſtrongeſt Arguments.

Proofs.

Proofs in this Case are so numerous, they present themselves to the Mind so naturally, that it wou'd seem a mere Banter to attempt to produce them. There is reason to presume that those who shall live in the next Age, will be very much surprized that Men have been obliged to do it.

These Proofs are written in *large Characters* on every Part of Nature. The Author of Nature has not done this without Design; he himself sends us to that School. The most savage Animal takes care of its Young. The most hard-hearted of Men, sooner or later, shew themselves Fathers, to even the most ungrateful Children.

The Consequences arising from hence are so visible, that they would suffer from being particulariz'd; besides, we should inevitably fall into frequent Repetitions of what is already said in the Book of *Letters*; particularly in the Dissertation, which serves as an Introduction to that Work.

Its tendency is to shew that GOD, being essentially *happy*, is of course essentially *beneficent*; that, being *beneficent*, he could not produce Creatures from nothing, with any other View than that of making them happy: that, being supremely *wise*, he must have foreseen what would befall his Work, and the misery into which it might fall: that being infinitely *good*, he would not have produced an infinity of Creatures, had his Wis-

dom

dom not found means for bringing them at laſt to *Happineſs*, to the *End* of their Creation.

Here an Appeal is made to the Teſtimony of every Man, capable of thinking, whether, upon the ſuppoſition of his being able to produce *Beings* out of *Nothing*, without a Power of making them *happy*, he would not chuſe to forbear ſuch Creation. This Proof becomes ſtill ſtronger by the Remark, which follows it in the introductory Diſſertation; *viz.* that Men are born *miſerable* before they become *criminal*; whence it follows, that if they were likewiſe born into the *Danger* of being eternally miſerable, (which would be the Caſe of three parts in four of Mankind,) Brutes would be in a condition infinitely preferable. But I chuſe to refer the Reader to the Piece itſelf, rather than give him any more Extracts from it in this place.

Though ſuch *forcible Reaſons* were confirmed in Scripture only by the two or three Declarations, I aſk, whether they would not be of more *weight* than certain *Expreſſions*, which might ſeem to import the contrary. But we are not reduced ſo low; ſo far from being obliged to do violence to the Letter, in order to make it ſpeak in favour of an univerſal *Reſtoration*, it muſt neceſſarily ſuffer Violence in a thouſand places before that Opinion can be eluded.

How much pains doth Mr. *R*—— take to avoid

avoid the moſt natural Senſe that preſents itſelf to the Mind, when we meet with the Paſſages which mention the *Salvation of all Men*, *an univerſal Reconciliation of all Creatures* to GOD, the Deſign propoſed by GOD of being one day *all in all*, of ſhewing *Mercy to all Men*, of making the *Gift* more extenſive than the *Offence*, of repairing through JESUS CHRIST all the Damage which *Adam*'s Diſobedience may have done? I grant that the Words *all Men* ſometimes ſtand for *many*; but what reaſon is there for taking them here in that limited Senſe? I go ſtill farther; we are ſo far from having a right to reduce the Term *all Men* to the Idea of *many*, that it is indiſputable that the Word *many* frequently ſignifies *all Men*; and particularly in the preſent Queſtion.

This appears from the Words of the Apoſtle. *As by one Man's Diſobedience*, many *were made Sinners*; *ſo by the Obedience of one*, *ſhall* many *be made righteous**. I aſk whether the Term *many* doth not here ſignify *all Men*. *All Men* became Sinners by *Adam:* Therefore *all Men* muſt be made *righteous* by JESUS CHRIST *.

Were

* It is matter of Surprize, that Mr. *R*— ſhould quote a Text for the ſupport of his Syſtem, which makes directly againſt him. He obſerves that, if there are ſeveral Paſſages, in which we find the Words *all Men*, there are others where we meet with the Word *Many*. He begins with that which ſays, JESUS CHRIST *has laid down his Life as a Ranſom for many*. If for *many*,

Were we reduced to the Neceſſity of proving the Syſtem of a *Reſtoration* by poſitive Declarations, this, among ſeveral others, would have no ſmall weight; and I ſhould deſire Mr. *R*——— to let me know in what ſenſe the Word *many* is here to be underſtood.

He would perhaps deal with this Difficulty as he doth with the Words *always*, and *for ever*. According to him, when the *Vengeance* of GOD is concerned, *for ever* ſignifies *Eternity properly ſo called:* but when we are ſpeaking of the Duration of his *Patience* and *Mercy*, that Term ſignifies the Time of this Life.

" Several Paſſages are objected, ſays he, " where it is ſaid that GOD doth not chide " *for ever:* That he keepeth not his Anger " *for ever*. What is to be done in this Caſe? " Are we to underſtand theſe Paſſages ſo as " to open a door to the Repentance or Sal- " vation of the Damned? This would over- " throw the Doctrines, which I have eſtab- " liſhed. One Truth can never contradict " another. It is evident therefore, that all " thoſe Paſſages muſt be explained ſo as not " to claſh with the Doctrines already laid down;

many, ſays he, it is not therefore for *all*. And to complete his Proof, he concludes with that above produced, *As by one Man's Diſobedience*, &c. If Mr. *R*— deſigns to perſuade us that *all Men* are not to be made *righteous* through JESUS CHRIST, he muſt firſt prove that *all Men* were not made *Sinners* through *Adam*.

* This is ſaid in expreſs Terms, *Letter* II.

" down; consequently we must give them " a Sense, the Truth of which is confined to " the present Life, and this is not difficult." *pag.* 82. *

A very satisfactory Doctrine, and such as affords us very exalted Ideas of the divine Goodness, Wisdom, and Mercy!

When we read what the Scripture says of that eternal Mercy, we should be apt to imagine it invariably the same; and that its Course could never be stopt by a different manner of existing; this, at least, is the most natural Sense that presents itself to the Mind, on reading these Words: *He retaineth not his Anger for ever, because he delighteth in Mercy.* Micah vii. 18. *Thy Mercy O Lord, endureth for ever. Thou † wilt not forsake the Work of thy own Hands.* Psalm cxxxviii. 8. But this is a Mistake; the Passage from this to the other Life is sufficient for cutting off all Hopes in that Mercy which endures for ever: it has no farther Existence for a Person, snatched out of the World by an unforeseen Accident, perhaps in the Flower of his Age, before he was entirely converted ‖: as

* We plainly see this is not difficult.

Note of the Translator.

† Thus our Author reads the Text of the *Psalmist.* The English Version has it; *Forsake not the Works of thy own Hands*; which is more agreeable to the *Original*, the *Septuagint*, and *Vulgate.*

‖ Let us suppose two Men in the Flower of their Age, who have spent their Youth in a loose and disorderly manner. Let us suppose them exactly in the same

as soon as this Soul has quitted the Body, it ceases to be the Work of GOD, who abandons it for ever*.

Who is it that teaches this Doctrine, against the express Decisions of Scripture, and the clearest Notions of common Sense? 'Tis our Author, who has made no difficulty of asserting, that what the Scripture teaches us concerning the Patience and Mercy of GOD, must be confined to the narrow bounds of the present Life.

He goes still farther, and maintains that it would be impious to suppose this Mercy can

same Degree of Dissoluteness; one of them is killed by a Stone: the other, who sees the fatal Stroke, awakes, reforms his Conduct, gives Proofs of a sincere Conversion, and dies some Years after in a Disposition very different from that of his Companion when he was taken off. According to the old System, one of them would be happy, and the other lost beyond all Recovery. Here now is an infinite Disproportion between the Conditions of these two Men. What is the Cause of this Disproportion? the Blow that fell on one rather than the other. From that moment Mercy can do nothing in favour of the unfortunate Man. Had the other been in his place, he had shared the same Fate. But what is a Blow, which has been decisive of an Eternity of Happiness or Misery? It is either Chance or Providence. Can we bear to think of the Consequences that follow?

* Nothing is so contrary to good Sense, as to limit the Divine Clemency and Mercy to the space of this Life, which is but the first Hour of Man's Duration. Shall a different manner of existing put it out of his power to feel the Effects of a Goodness, which is eternally the same? Doth the Separation of the Soul from the Body make it cease to be the Work of God; a Work which he cannot forsake?

can be extended beyond the preſent Life.

" GOD, ſays he, having ſworn in his " wrath, that he will exclude from the hea- " venly Reſt, all ſuch as diſobey him obſti- " nately; how dares any man venture to " promiſe the Wicked that GOD will per- " jure himſelf in their favour, and admit " them into his Reſt? Is not ſuch a Thought " ſhocking? In reality, a man muſt have a " very ſtrong ſtomach, to digeſt things ſo " hard." *Page 65.*

As Mr. *R*—— in this place indulges the tranſports of his Zeal, he has not obſerved that it is poſſible to give him an Oath, on the other ſide, much more expreſſive and formal, recorded by the Prophet *Iſaiah*. *I have ſworn by my ſelf*, ſaith GOD, *and the word is gone out of my mouth in righteouſneſs, and ſhall not be recalled; that every Knee ſhall bow before Me, and every Tongue ſhall ſwear by Me.*

I aſk, which of the two Oaths is moſt ſolemn? *I have ſworn in my wrath:* The very words inſinuate that this Oath is not irrevocable; ſince GOD elſewhere declares, that he retaineth not his anger for ever. *That they ſhould never enter into my reſt.* But why muſt *never* here imply *Eternity properly ſo called?* Might it not ſignify a *long Duration*, an *indefinite time?* Mr. *R*—— reduces the word *for ever* much lower, when he reſtrains it to the preſent Life.

After this, is it highly injurious to the Deity to take literally a Promiſe made to all Mankind,

Mankind, confirmed by an Oath, where GOD ſwears *by himſelf*; to ſuppoſe a time will come, when all Creatures ſhall be brought back to the deſign of their Creation; a time when the *Blaſphemy* of the Damned ſhall be changed into *Praiſe*, when every Creature ſhall do homage to the *Goodneſs* and *Juſtice* of the Creator; to ſuppoſe that this may be the *Reſtoration*, which GOD propoſed by ſending his Son? Is there any reaſon for crying out that *ſuch Thoughts are ſhocking: that a man muſt have a very ſtrong ſtomach to digeſt things ſo hard?*

Mr. *R*—— has ſeveral other Ideas of the *Reſtoration* which JESUS CHRIST came to effect. Let us hear his own words on the Subject*, *Page* 101. " *John the Baptiſt*, " ſays he, ſpeaking of JESUS CHRIST, " and of the deſign of his coming, ſays, " *He hath his fan in his hand, and will per-* " *fectly cleanſe his floor.* And how is this " to be performed? By converting the Chaff " into good Corn? No. *He will gather the* " *Wheat into his Barn, and burn the Chaff* " *with unquenchable Fire* †. This is the *Re-* " *ſtoration*

* Mr. *R*—— makes this Paragraph follow a long Article concerning the Diſcord, which reigns in the World; but as the Queſtion here turns on the *Reſtoration*, it was thought ſufficient to quote this only.

† It is plain that the *Baptiſt* doth not here ſpeak of the *univerſal Reſtoration*, but of the times of *Retribution* and *Vengeance*, which are to precede it. In a *literal*

" *ſtoration* to be expected. The Children " of GOD ſhall be fully ſanctified, and made " ſubject to their heavenly Father.——The " Wicked (*that is, above three fourths of Man-* " *kind*) ſentenced to the bottomleſs Pit, ſhall " no longer be able to ſeduce or abuſe them. " Will not this be a magnificent *Reſtoration*, " and worthy of the Wiſdom, Goodneſs, " Power, and Sanctity of GOD?"

Let it be obſerved, at leaſt, that theſe are Mr. Profeſſor's own Words; for ſome might think this an Irony deſigned for ridiculing the pretended *Reſtoration*, which he calls *magnificent*, and in which he makes all terminate.

Is it neceſſary to undertake a ſerious Confutation of this Doctrine? I would deſire no other Judge on this occaſion than a *Savage*. In order to make him ſuch, I would uſe an example ſuited to his capacity.

I would ſuppoſe a rich Man, Father of a large Family, who, among a number of Children, had ſome well-diſpoſed and obedient, while the majority of them were vicious, and created diſorder in his houſe. What method does this Father take for reeſtabliſhing

literal Senſe, he had the deſtruction of the *Jews* in view; in a *ſpiritual*, the Fire of Juſtice which is to conſume all Injuſtice. If the *Jews*, whoſe Deſtruction he foretels, are to be reſtored, doth not even that lead us to the Idea of a more univerſal Reſtoration? Beſides, the Term *unquenchable Fire* amounts to no more in this place than thoſe of *always* and *for ever*.

eſtabliſhing Order in his Family? After ſome ſevere Reprimands, he allows his rebellious Children * a Month for amending their Lives. They ſtill continuing in their evil courſes, the Father enters on other meaſures: He orders them all to be ſhut up in dungeons, to be fed with Bread and Water, while his favourite Children enjoy Plenty, and live at their eaſe.

But the *Savage* will ſay, thoſe dungeons are probably places of Correction, deſigned to bring them to their duty; after which, the Father will receive them among their Brethren. No, ſay I, they are *Priſons*, from which they will *never* be delivered: The Father diſinherits them *for ever*; he will hear nothing more in their favour; thus he re-eſtabliſhes Order in his Family. How! ſays the *Savage*; ſhall thoſe unfortunate Children be allowed but one Month for reforming their Conduct? Shall their Impriſonment never have an end? Shall there be no relief for them? Would that be juſt? And with what eye, continues he, can the other Children look on the deſperate ſtate of their Brethren?

The others, ſay I, will form Concerts of Joy, and praiſe the goodneſs of their Father, in providing ſo well for them. They will think of the *Miſery* of their unhappy Brethren, only

* The longeſt Life, when compared to Eternity, is leſs than an Hour, when compared to the longeſt Life. Judge then if there is any exaggeration in comparing the preſent Life to one Month.

only to give them a higher relish of their own *Happiness*. Would not this be a *magnificent Restoration?* and such as furnishes us with exalted Ideas of the Father's wisdom. I leave every one to judge what the *Savage* would think of it. But what would he think, should I add one Circumstance more to the account; and tell him, that this Father was able to reduce his rebellious Children to their duty: that he could thus have established order and harmony in his whole Family; that all this was in his power, but he *would not* do it? To this Circumstance, which can hardly enter into one's thoughts, all that remains would be to add *Eternity* instead of *Time*; this is, as to the substance, a just Idea of the System of the *Particularists*.

This surprizing Proposition, that GOD *could* * *save all men, but will not*, is not unjustly charged on them; at least if Mr. *R*—— is well acquainted with their System, as he certainly

* If it were proper for any to adopt the System of a *Restoration*, it certainly is so for such, as hold absolute Election and Reprobation. When we hear it said, that all Men are predestined, before their Birth, some to eternal Happiness, others to Torments for several Ages; we should be surprized, and immediately ask, why so wide a Disproportion? However, when it is added, that all shall at last be brought to Bliss, the Mind would be comforted, though it could not be satisfied with the Thought. But when the Idea of *endless Duration* is joined to that of *absolute Reprobation*, it is hard to conceive what a Man must be made of, to bear such a Prospect; and we are obliged to suppose those who admit it, have never well considered it.

certainly is. He makes this objection to himself: "Is GOD almighty? Can he not renew "them, and give them repentance by the "miraculous Force of his Holy Spirit? He "can, without doubt, but he *will* not."

I doubt whether the Sticklers for this System can bear the sight of such an Idea. They will be obliged to have recourse to some verbal distinctions for palliating or extenuating what is insupportable in it.

The Doctrine of the *Universalists*, of those who maintain the Eternity of Hell, though defective, has yet nothing so shocking. GOD, say they, would that all Men were saved *; but as he will not constrain their Liberty, he permits them to run into eternal Damnation †: that is, to speak plainly, GOD could not in all Eternity find means for reducing Men to order, in a manner consistent with Liberty; his *Wisdom* wants helps for succeeding in the attempt. In short, this is to suppose that the Deity

* The Patrons of this System, at least, do justice to infinite *Goodness*. They suppose the Invitation of GOD to Men sincere. But, to suppose the *infinitely perfect* Being proposes a Design, in which he miscarries, implies a Contradiction.

† He certainly permits them to run into it; but the question is, whether he will leave them there for ever: Whether his Wisdom will not provide them with some means for quitting that State; whether, supposing he has formed such a Design, he will not be able to execute it. See an Answer to this in the *Dissertation on the Nature of Evil*, &c. after the fifth of the *fourteen Letters*.

Deity hath an *End* worthy of perfect Goodness, but cannot compass that *End*.

Hence it is evident, that both Systems are attended with insuperable Difficulties: that they are incompatible with the Idea of the *perfect Being*. Accordingly, we see the Divines of both Parties accuse each other of injuring some one of the divine Attributes.

Does a Man do them an ill office, who endeavours to terminate their difference, and offers them a System, freed from those difficulties, which give the *Pyrrhonists* an advantage?

Has Mr. *R*—— reason to complain that we take part with the Enemies of Religion, by furnishing them with arms against it? Can a Man be said to oppose Religion, who divests it of what is *foreign* to it, or what renders it contemptible to such as know it only by the Dress with which it is disguised?

May not we find some sincere, well-meaning Persons, among those whom we call *Deists*, who have an aversion to Christianity only on account of the Contradictions they imagine they see in it? Are we not obliged to do something for such Men, if any such there be? While we do them this good office, we do it to others, who might suffer themselves to be prejudiced against Religion by them. But a stiff and rigorous opposition of their Difficulties would not be the most proper means for reclaiming them. It is not impossible they may sometimes be in

the right; and an attention to what Truth they may say, is a duty which we owe ourselves. If they have attacked the Doctrine of the Eternity of Hell, without sufficient reason, and consider'd it as inseparable from our Religion, are we to be surprized at their aversion to Christianity?

I think, Sir, I have already said enough for defending the *fourteen Letters*, or, at least, for shewing they have suffer'd nothing from the Criticisms lately published by Mr. *R*——.

POSTSCRIPT.

NO direct Answer has been given to Mr. *R*——'s Objection concerning the Passage relating to *Judas*, and that concerning *Matt.* xxv. 46. But I think what has been already said contains an indirect Answer.

It has been shewn that JESUS CHRIST *died for all Men*; *Judas* is one of that number: *that every Tongue shall* at last *give praise to* GOD; *Judas* cannot be excluded. Let us now consider in what Circumstances our Lord pronounces those words, *it had been good for that Man, if he had not been born.* Did he pronounce them *dogmatically*, in order to make of them what we call an *Article of Faith*, in order to inform us, without the least ambiguity, what will be the final state of the Damned? This is far from being the case. It appears here that our Lord consider'd the Con-

Condition of the Wretch who was on the point of betraying him: that, terrified at the torments he was to endure, he speaks in a manner conformable to the state of Despair, into which his Crime would throw him. And who doubts that the torments which *Judas* felt, made him wish a thousand times that he had never been born*? If *Job*'s extreme Affliction forced such wishes from him, is it surprizing that a *Judas*, who certainly knew not whether those Torments would have an end or not, should actually prefer Annihilation to Being?

After all, though we could not explain the Sense meant by our Saviour†, when he spoke these words, what would follow? That the *Certain* cannot be shaken by the *Uncertain*; and that an *obscure* Proposition, in a *particular* Case, can never be allow'd good Evidence against *plain* and *universal* Propositions.

But our Lord says, *Matt.* xxv. 46. *The Wicked shall go away into everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life eternal.*

Here, we are told, is a miserable Eternity, opposed to a blessed Eternity; why must one be admitted with restriction, and the other in an absolute sense? It might be a sufficient Answer, that *Expressions* can never overthrow a

* This notwithstanding, when *Judas* is once re-established, he may then own it was good for him to have received a Being.

† It would be ridiculous to ground our Reasonings on a thing we do not comprehend.

Truth eſtabliſhed on *fixed Principles*. The Puniſhment of *eternal Fire*, which conſumed *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, might likewiſe be oppoſed to the Expreſſion of *everlaſting Puniſhment*. The former of theſe Expreſſions, oppoſed to the latter, may be ſufficient for rendering it ambiguous. But, let us come to the Reaſons which induce us to admit of a happy Eternity in an abſolute Senſe, and a miſerable Eternity in a limited ſenſe.

The word *Puniſhment* join'd to that of *Eternity* has ſomething contradictory. When we mention *Puniſhment*, we ſpeak of a *violent ſtate*, a forced ſituation, the *Cauſe* of which is accidental, foreign to the nature of the thing, and which conſequently cannot endure to Eternity.

Eternity, join'd to a happy Life, is ſo far from implying any thing contradictory, that it is admitted without the leaſt difficulty. The happy Life has always exiſted in GOD; it is eternal as GOD Himſelf *. There is no difficulty in ſuppoſing that what proceeds from an *eternal Principle*, exiſts *eternally*. But it is infinitely hard † to ſuppoſe the *Eternity* of a *violent Situation*, of which *Diſorder* is the *Principle*. Now

* If GOD has granted *created* Beings the Privilege of exiſting *eternally*, he certainly did ſo in regard to that happy Life, of which he is the *Principle*; not in regard to that State of *Puniſhment*, which is merely *accidental*.

† This is fully explained in the *Diſſertation on the Nature of Evil*, &c. to be ſeen after the fifth of the *fourteen Letters*.

Now let any Man judge what must be here meant by the Expression of *everlasting Punishment**.

LETTER III.

I Own, Sir, that there are several Articles in the *Enquiry into Origenism*, which I have passed by unobserved. I thought it sufficient to support or defend the Principles of the Work; and that I might easily be excused answering such Passages as rather attack the Author than his Book.

Thus I have said nothing to that long Article, where Mr. *R*—— confounding Dr. *Petersein* with the Letter-writer, attacks the first of those Authors on account of some Quotations from *Virgil*, which he says are not exact; and the Conclusion from which, by way of Reverberation, makes directly against those whom he stiles *Origenists*.

" I was of opinion, says he, that it would " not be improper to enlarge a little on this " Subject, in order to let the Publick know, " from the Example of Dr. *Petersein*, the

 " great

* A *violent* State, when of long duration, must appear a sort of Eternity to those so situated. 'Tis probably in this sense that our Lord calls it *eternal Punishment*. Mr. *R*—— grants that the word *eternal* sometimes denotes the whole time that a thing may last. I desire no other Explication. The *Eternity* of *Evil* will be conformable to the nature of *Evil: Evil* is not *eternal* in its Origin; therefore it will not be *eternal* in its *Duration*.

" great *Patriarch* * of the *Origeniſts*, that " thoſe Gentlemen are not nice in the choice " of their Proofs; for if he has dared to miſ- " quote a Pagan Author, in the hands of eve- " ry School-boy ——— ought not his Rea- " ders to be on their guard againſt the Quo- " tations produced from Scripture by him " and his Diſciples after him?"

The Concluſion, we ſee, is levelled at the Author of the *Letters*, who, according to Mr. *R*——— is Dr. *Peterſein*'s Diſciple. This is admirable! to be the Diſciple of a Doctor whom he never knew †, either perſonally or by any of his Writings; and, which is more, to have borrow'd of him the Art of miſquoting, &c. this is what no Man would ever have imagined.

What

* Writers will perhaps ſome time or other leave off the unjuſt Practice of charging all thoſe with the ſame things, who chance to think alike on certain Points, and who in other reſpects can have no relation one to the other.

Take this as an Inſtance.

The *Janſeniſts* believe abſolute Predeſtination.

Mr. *R*—— believes the ſame.

Therefore Mr. *R*—— is a *Janſeniſt*; *Janſenius* is his Patriarch.

Again, ſome one *Janſeniſtical* Doctor is not very nice in the Choice of his Proofs, and miſquotes Authors to ſerve his Purpoſe.

Therefore Mr. *R*——— is likewiſe not very nice in the Choice of his Proofs, &c.

† This is not to be taken as meant againſt the Doctor: the Author would do him all the Juſtice he may deſerve, with pleaſure, was he acquainted with what regards him, by reading his Works.

What do you think now, Sir? Are these Articles such as deserve a Confutation? I say the same of the Explication he quotes from the Doctor, for which, without doubt, he makes his pretended Disciple answerable *. I own I should have been but an untoward Disciple, so far as that Explication is concerned. A Man need not be a profound Logician, to discover the Sophistry of it.

I thought I might likewise pass over the Article which affords Mr. *R*—— so happy an opportunity of exclaiming. *Page* 107. Let us see on what Foundation he does it. He quotes the following Passage from the second Letter:

This Separation of the Soul from the Body is not what the Scriptures call Death. *They term it only* Sleep; *and particularly in the Chapter, where St.* Paul *speaks of the* Dead *under the appellation of* Sleepers, *or those who* sleep. *But what they call* Death, *the Great Death, is the Disunion of the Soul from* GOD. He ought to have added what follows; *This Death was meant, when* Adam *was told that the day he should eat of the forbidden Fruit he should surely die.*

Here Mr. *R*—— is amazed; he is doubtful whether he is awake or not, or whether he ought to believe his own Eyes. He concludes,

* The Explication is this: *The Fire shall not be extinguished while Hell endures; but Hell will not endure for ever.*

however, that the Author was asleep when he wrote this.

"It follows therefore, says he, from our "Author's Principles, that all those who the "Scripture says are *dead*, are disunited from "GOD, are damned."

The Consequence is wonderful. When we read that *Noah* and *Joshua* died, we are to understand that they are *damned*. Do you think, Sir, a Man is obliged to justify himself, and deny so ridiculous a Consequence?

It might be sufficient for me to ask Mr. *R*—— whether the Term *Death* hath not different Significations in Scripture? Whether when St. *Paul* says he hoped GOD would hereafter deliver him *from so great a Death*, 2 *Cor.* i. 10. he hoped he should not die corporally? Whether when our Saviour says, *John* viii. 51. *he who keeps his Word, shall never see death*, he had this bodily Death in view. If so, the *Jews* would have had good reason to reproach our Lord, and, taking those Words in a literal Sense, say to him, *Abraham is dead, and the Prophets are dead; who makest thou thy self?*

Under pretence that in the figurative Sense, the Term *Death* usually signifies *spiritual Death* *, will it follow that there is some Mystery

* When our Lord says, *Let the Dead bury their Dead*, what could he mean? Did *Adam* die *bodily* the very day he eat of the forbidden Fruit? Our Lord says likewise, *he who liveth and believeth in me shall never die*. It is probable he doth not here promise an Exemption from bodily Death. Nor is it less evident that bodily Death.

Myſtery in the hiſtorical Senſe, when it is ſaid that *Abraham* is dead? I muſt own that there ſeems ſo little room for miſtake here, that if Mr. *R*—— had not obliged me to take notice of it, I ſhould have paſs'd it over in ſilence.

Is there any neceſſity of an Anſwer to that Article of the *Reſtoration of all things?* Mr. *R*— begins with the Remark quoted *Chap.* 2d, inſtead of *Chap.* 3d. He then quarrels with his Antagoniſt for not quoting the Paſſage at length. That might have been neceſſary, had we pretended to eſtabliſh the whole Syſtem on that ſingle Paſſage. It would then have been neceſſary to particularize the leaſt Syllables; but there is no deſign here of uſing it as a Proof; it is only quoted by the way, without dwelling on it one moment. It is affirmed, that JESUS CHRIST *came to reſtore all things.* This is not cited as a Paſſage, but as a Propoſition. It is added, that this *Reſtoration is mention'd in the Acts of the Apoſtles*; which is all that is ſaid;

Death is expreſſed by *ſleeping*, in the ſame Chapter which gives Mr. *R*—— occaſion to exclaim. In 1 *Cor.* xv. St. *Paul* ſpeaks of *thoſe who die in* CHRIST. And again, CHRIST *is become the firſt Fruits of thoſe who ſleep.* He elſewhere ſays, *I would not have you ignorant concerning thoſe who ſleep.* In reality, the whole enquiry is, whether *bodily Death* is not frequently expreſſed by the Term *Sleep*; and whether *ſpiritual* Death is not as frequently expreſſed by the word *Death? Bodily Death* then is only a Conſequence of *ſpiritual* Death: it is no more than a *tranſitory Accident* of it. So that when GOD ſpeaks of his deceaſed Servants, he ſays they are *fallen aſleep.* Mr. *R*—— would not have been ſo much amazed, had he obſerved this.

Mr. *R*—— takes a great deal of unneceſſary pains to ſhew that this Paſſage doth not prove the *univerſal Reſtoration*. I am willing to grant it; but what will he gain by the Conceſſion, ſince it was not grounded on that Paſſage?

I ſay the ſame of ſeveral other Paſſages, ſuch as *Coloſſ* i. 1. *Epheſ.* xv. and more of the ſame kind, which are employ'd only *ex abundanti*, not as capital Proofs. Mr. *R*—— having laboured hard to prove what they do not ſignify, takes no leſs pains to prove what they do ſignify. If he pleaſes, we will give them all up, without fearing the Edifice will be ſhaken. I think I have demonſtrated that is founded on *Things*, not on *Expreſſions*, the Senſe of which may be diſputed.

Mr. *N*—— obſerves likewiſe, that I have left one important Article unjuſtified. According to Mr. *R*—— it is dangerous to publiſh a Syſtem, *which may do ſo much Miſchief in the world, and no Good.* This ought to have been made out. It is thought that the contrary is proved in the ſixth Letter.

But, waving that Letter, I aſk the Reader, whether the Spirit which runs through the whole Work, doth in the leaſt lead Men to Irreligion and Security, as Mr. *R*— ſuppoſes?

" Is it a ſmall matter, ſays he, to do the " office of the Tempter; to deſtroy Souls, by " weakning the Motives to the Fear of GOD, " and open a door to Remiſſneſs?" *Page* 27.

It

It would be difficult to answer this Accusation, without repeating what has been already said in the sixth Letter. I rather chuse to refer the Reader to that Letter than transcribe it here. I might, with some reason, ask Mr. *R*—— whether he has read it or not. If not, I retract. We have seen Mr. *R*— quotes it, however, as well as the fourteenth. See what he says of them.

"They pretend, says he, that their System "is better calculated than that of the Ortho- "dox, for conveying just Ideas of GOD, of "his Justice and Goodness; for making "Men love him, and serve him with Love "and Openness of Heart. The Author im- "ploys two Letters (the sixth and fourteenth) "on this Subject, where he labours hard to "prove his assertion by arguments." *Page* 21.

Mr. *R*——therefore ought to have attack'd those Arguments. But has he done it? He takes a shorter way, and appeals to Experience. *To what purpose is it*, says he, *to argue against Experience?* Page 21.

The Proof is demonstrative. In reality, what wonderful Effects has not the opinion of a miserable Eternity produced, among Christians, during the 1700 Years it has been preached, and the Belief of it professed? Mr. *R*— allows indeed that they are still wicked, profane, *&c.* in spite of that Persuasion. But he pretends they would be much more so, if this Restraint was removed.

" Oh! says he, may the Mercy of GOD " never permit the Opinion of those Gentle- " men to prevail in the world; it would soon " produce horrible Confusion." *p.* 23.

At this rate, Mr. *R*— appeals to future Experience, not to the Experience of what has already happen'd. The question is, what would be the Event, if the System of a *Restoration* should be received among Christians, as long as that of a *miserable Eternity* has been taught and believed. In that case we must wait sixteen or seventeen hundred Years; and then, by comparing the History of those two Periods, we shall be able to take Experience for our Judge.

In the mean time, it may be observed that the Experience of what is past is not a Prejudice very favourable to the *Thesis*, which Mr. *R*——— undertakes to maintain.

Let us now enquire what Springs are most proper for putting Men in action, or restraining them.

Religion, it will be said, is one of the strongest, on account of the Motives of *Fear*, which it offers. It is well known what Impression *Fear* makes on the Mind. Now nothing is so dreadful as the Menace of eternal Torments. If, therefore, you remove that Restraint, you deprive Religion of the power it would have had to check Men in their vicious Courses.

I readily own that *Fear* may do much with Men, and that if Religion was deprived of all Motives

Motives of *Fear*, it would make but little Impreſſion on them. But then I maintain, that if this *Fear* is not grounded on the *Principles* of *Juſtice*, which Man finds engraved on his own Heart, it will have no *force*. I think it may not be improper to inſert in this place, what appears in form of a Note on the ſixth Letter.

All things rightly conſider'd, the moſt terrible Ideas, and ſuch as make the ſtrongeſt Impreſſion on Men, are thoſe, the Truth of which is perceived, and to which common Senſe is obliged to ſubſcribe. Every Opinion, that proceeds from a falſe Principle, deſtroys itſelf; or, which is worſe, produces the contrary of what is expected from it.

Nothing that is over-ſtrained, or ſeems exaggerated, ſtrikes the Mind. Let a Schoolmaſter tell his Scholar that his Father will hang him, if he doth not ſtudy; he laughs at the Menace: it is too much diſproportioned both to his own demerits, and the Idea he entertains of his Father's Equity. Even Children have an Idea of *Proportion*: It is not in our power to efface it: we are never perſuaded by what Men would make us fear, if it is *diſproportioned* to what we are ſenſible we have deſerved: Nor are we encouraged or ſatisfied, when flattered with what is contrary to the ſame Proportion. If *Senſe* and *Evidence* do not confirm what is deſigned to be inculcated, we are never convinced: at moſt, we only imagine

imagine we believe it; it is no more than *Opinion*, that resides in the Brain.

Of this sort is the Opinion of a miserable Eternity. I dare be positive, that no Man is really persuaded of it*. I appeal to the Conscience of the most profligate Men upon earth (for there are some Moments when even Men of that Character are forced to listen to Conscience) what sort of an *Hereafter* it would offer to his view. A terrible Retribution; which he will be obliged to own he has deserved. Let him, for example, imagine a hundred Years spent in Torments, or two, or three thousand, if you please; he will be so amazed and stupified, that he will not know where to stop; but will not dare to pronounce it unjust: he has no distinct Idea of the more or less†. Let somebody come to him, while his

* Men are accustomed to the loose Term of *Eternity*; and those who profess to believe it, consent to it in a loose manner, without any Idea of what it implies. If the most zealous Partizans of this Opinion would seriously consider the meaning of *Duration without End*; would they begin with some Calculation, stop at the end of some thousands of Ages, and consider the state of those who have passed all those Ages in Torments; and then ask themselves, whether it is possible that those miserable Persons should be no farther advanced than they were the first day of their Sufferings; I am persuaded they would then be obliged either to turn their Eyes from such Objects, or allow that their loose Assent was very far from a Persuasion.

† We can entertain no distinct and clear Idea of the *Duration* of the Punishment to be suffered; because in order to know that, we must first know the *Degree* of it, and we

his Thoughts are thus employ'd, and tell him it is to no purpose for him to reckon Years, Ages, thousands of Ages, *&c.* that at the end of the Supputation, he will find a whole Eternity before him; I ask whether the Conscience of even such a Man would not be startled and shock'd at the Prospect: whether, instead of the *Yes*, which the strength of Truth forces from us, he would not feel within himself a determined *No*, a *That would be unjust*; *I have not deserved it.*

I am persuaded that Men, did they but consult their own Consciences, would feel the same Shock, both in regard to themselves and their Neighbour: for, in short, I suppose such as have no reason to fear for themselves, are capable of being concern'd for others; and I own I was not a little surprized at what Mr. *R*—— says on this Subject.

"When we shall be in a condition of no "longer fearing those Pains, it will be of lit-"tle importance to us, whether they are eter-"nal or not*. What concern is it to us to "know whether the Torments of Hell will "be eternal or not? Though we were certain-"ly

we ought to be thoroughly acquainted with the *Nature* of the *Evil* which it is to destroy, before we can form a right Judgment of either. But when the question turns on *Infinity*, or *Duration without End*, every thing within declares for the *Negative*.

* This Indifference would pretty much resemble that which has been supposed in those Children, who rejoice at their own Happiness, without giving themselves any Concern whether their Brethern are happy or miserable.

" ly assured they will not be so, of what use
" would that Knowledge be to us?"

I ask, in my turn, whether it is of any importance to know the GOD, whom we profess to serve under the Idea of the *perfect Being*; under the Idea of a Being, whose Attributes are so far from destroying each other*, that they invariably concur to the same end: of a Being as *beneficent* as *equitable*; all whose *Designs* are advantageous to Mankind, and who cannot miscarry in the execution of them?

Is it possible for us to pay sincere Homage to the *Justice* of a *partial* Being, who should weigh Men in an unequal Balance, who should place between Men of the same origin, the infinite disproportion of a happy and miserable Eternity?

Is it possible for us to admire the *Wisdom* of a Being, who through the immense Space of Eternity could not find means for restoring his Work?

Should we entertain exalted Ideas of a *Goodness* which should confine itself to a small number of Creatures, and consent to leave the greatest part of them in eternal Torments?

When we launch out into Praises of the great *Goodness* of GOD, and at the same time suppose that an infinity of Creatures will never feel the Effects of it, to what is our Idea of it reduced? On this Supposition, I do not praise

* It is impossible to reconcile Goodness with Justice by the System of a miserable Eternity.

praise GOD as a Being *essentially* and *universally beneficent*, but as a Being, who does ME good. When I admire the *Preference* * which GOD gives me to others, and thank him for it, do I not tacitly praise him for being *partial*? In this case I do not admire a Perfection in GOD, but rejoice at the Advantage I receive from him.

All things rightly consider'd, whatever satisfaction a Man feels, who thinks himself thus favoured, it is not so secure but it may be disturbed. If the Benevolence of GOD is not *absolute* to all Men, who can assure me I am not one of those, who shall be excluded from it? For, in short, whatever share I imagine I have in the divine Favour, I may be one of those, who have been *illuminated*, have tasted of the *Celestial Gift*, and afterwards *relapse*.

In reality, if the *Soul* of Religion consists in a Dependance on the Deity †, not in a *forced* manner, but by *free Choice*, I am of opinion that it concerns us to know him under Ideas different from those which the old System affords. In order to do that, there is no necessity of *inventing* or forming new Ideas; it is sufficient

* That is, if thi Preference goes so far as to place between one Man and another the infinite Disproportion of a happy and miserable Eternity.

† Nothing is so comfortable as a Dependance on a Being, who wills our Happiness in an absolute manner, and is thoroughly acquainted with the roads that may lead us to it. But to depend on a Being, who perhaps doth not admit us into the rank of those whom he will make happy; this can be done only by force.

cient that we allow those already engraved on our Minds, to *manifest* or *offer* themselves*.

Again, if we are concern'd to know Religion under an Idea different from that of a *Chaos* †, we are concerned to be disabused of the *Eternity* of Hell.

After this, can we be *Men*‡, and look on the rest of Mankind with Indifference?

Let us suppose a Citizen of a great City, who supposing it on the Point of being burnt, should, in conjunction with some of his Friends, be favour'd with the Privilege of being saved from the Flames; I imagine that such a Man,

* Several, who have read the *Letters*, have experienced this. They have found that they *unfold* to their Minds the Ideas which they before entertained *indistinctly*, and which were as it were clouded with *Prejudice* and Credulity in the Doctrines of Men.

† The System of a miserable Eternity produces a most extravagant *Chaos*; it destroys the whole Idea of Providence, and leads us to doubt of every thing. Put that of a *Restoration* in its place, the *Chaos* is cleared up. *Harmony* and Order shine forth; if not in this World, we have a glimpse of it, at least, in the Scenes of the World to come.

‡ Men of a *Beneficent* Character, who have cultivated Sentiments of Humanity in their Minds, feel an inexpressible Satisfaction in considering all Men, as destined to the Enjoyment of the same Happiness. It is hard for such as consider only a very small Number as *Elect*, not to conceive a certain Contempt and Aversion for the generality of Mankind. With how different an Eye do we look on Men, when we are assured that they will all, without exception, enter into the Designs of GOD on Mankind; Men, who, according to St. *Paul*, are *formed of one Blood*, and being the *Offspring* of GOD himself, must at last necessarily be brought back to their Father. See what is said of the Love of our Neighbour in the fourteenth Letter.

Man, being uncertain of the Truth of the matter, ſhould ſay to his Friends, *What Concern is it to us to know, whether it will be burnt or not*, ſince we ſhall not be included in the Ruin?

I do not pretend to charge Mr. *R*—— with Sentiments ſo void of Humanity. I ſuppoſe this Concluſion eſcaped him before he ſaw the Conſequences of it. I have obſerved that, in his Preface, *Page* 5. he advances what ſeems to ſpeak the contrary. " I am ſatisfied, ſays " he, that all Chriſtian Divines, not excepting " thoſe, who are the fartheſt advanced in " Sanctity, will hardly ſay to thoſe Perſons, " *Let the* LORD *do as you ſay, let him execute* " *what you teach.*"

I think therefore, to proceed equitably, I ought to employ this Paſſage for rectifying the diſadvantageous Impreſſions, that the oppoſite Language might produce againſt Mr. *R*——.

But ſince he is pleaſed to allow that it were to be wiſhed all Men might be ſaved; I wou'd fain know on what he grounds the *Impoſſibility* of a Work ſo worthy of GOD, and ſo advantageous to Mankind. It cannot be on an Impoſſibility on GOD's ſide; for thoſe Gentlemen maintain that *all Things* are *poſſible* to him. This being ſuppoſed, we muſt conclude that GOD *can* do it, but *will* not. Let us dwell no longer on this Subject, ſince it has been already handled.

Mr. *R*—— finiſhes his concluſion by adding: " Though we had a Certainty that the " Tor-

" Torments of Hell will not be Eternal, of " what other uſe wou'd ſuch an Aſſurance " be to us, but to throw us into Security?" " *Page* 30.

Perhaps, the *Reſtoration*, were it conſidered alone and independent of the Torments which muſt precede it, might incline Men to Remiſſneſs; but it is impoſſible to ſeparate one from the other. This is ſo true, that if we were to tell the moſt ſtupid that all Men ſhall be reſtored immediately after they quit this Life, without receiving the juſt Retribution of the *Evil* they have done, I am perſuaded no Man could aſſent to it, how much ſoever his Intereſt might be concerned in believing it.

It is after the terrible Idea of a State of *Weeping, gnaſhing of Teeth, Hell*, and a *burning Lake*, that the Idea of a *Reſtoration* is received, and is in its proper place. The more we are perſuaded the Torments will have an end, the more we are convinced that each Man muſt bear the Puniſhment of his own Iniquity, and that in the moſt *exact proportion.*

This has been proved in the 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th Letters, in a manner, which leaves but little room for Security. I am of opinion that no Man will reſolve to make a Trial of the Hell there deſcribed, under pretence that it will have an end. Not to mention the Hell, which regards only the Reprobate;

Reprobate; is there any ſtronger Preſervative againſt Security than the Idea of that Purification which every Creature muſt undergo, in proportion to the Degree of *Evil* which ſhall be found in him?

Mr. *R*——— in more than one place, ſpeaks of the danger of leading to Remiſſneſs. Doth he not obſerve that he himſelf has done this by endeavouring to overthrow that Truth founded on the Idea of *Proportion*, and the very Nature of *Good* and *Evil?* He ſuppoſes he has really overthrown it; which I ſtill doubt. It is evident, at leaſt, that he attacks not one of the Principles which ſupport it. The Reader need only peruſe the 9th, 10th and 11th Letters, to be convinced of this.

See how he cuts the *Gordian* Knot. "I "have already, ſays he, overthrown this Sup- "poſition (ſpeaking of the *Purification*) by "ſhewing from clear and deciſive Texts of "Scripture, that after Death there is no "room for Repentance, no more Sacrifice "for Sin: that the preſent Life is the Time "of GOD's Patience, and conſequently of "Man's Purification." Here he quotes *Rom.* xi. 4. *Page* 67.

He then concludes: "I might add ſeveral "things againſt the *Purification*; but that "wou'd carry me too far: the Anſwer I "have given, is of itſelf ſufficient for over- "throwing this whole Syſtem of Revolutions "in the other World, which is built only

"on

" on the warm Imagination of these Gentle-
" men."

This is soon said; this is overthrowing a System with a single Finger. Several Persons will find their Account in depending on this Decision *. Who knows but those, who suffer themselves to be amused in this manner, may one day find by Experience, that this System had a Foundation, very different from a warm Imagination; and whether they will thank the Doctors, who have so successfully flattered them?

I should pass for a Dealer in Paradoxes, if I said that the Orthodox System of the Eternity of Hell has been hitherto the most efficacious Snare for throwing Men into Security. But I prove it thus:

In what shall we make the Preservatives, given by GOD against Security, consist? Is it not in the *Ideas* of an *immutable Justice* engraven on the Mind, which renders to every one according to his Deeds in the most exact *Proportion?* In the Judgment pronounced by Conscience against all *Injustice* and *voluntary Illusion?*

Has he not added to this interiour Testimony,

* The Author does not here speak of open and notorious Sinners; but of Persons, who believing themselves secure from Eternal Damnation, are over-joyed at persuading themselves, that there is no *Medium*, between this Hell and Paradise; whence it follows, that on quitting this Life, Paradise is infallibly open to them.

mony, that which the Scripture every where bears of the ſame *Juſtice*, which makes every one *reap* according to what he has *ſown?*

Are not theſe the ſtrongeſt Motives for a *well-grounded* Fear; grounded, I ſay on a *Juſtice*, from which we cannot fly, and on which we cannot impoſe?

But what is more proper for ſtifling this juſt *Fear*, grounded on the Idea of a *Proportion*, than the View of a Syſtem, which ranks all Men in two Claſſes at an infinite diſtance from each other; and which, while it ſuppoſes a *good* and *merciful* GOD, threatens eternal Torments, and leaves no Expectation of others?

This Idea of *Mercy*, oppoſed to the Menace of *eternal Fire*, either deſtroys it, or renders it uſeleſs. An Idea of *Repentance*, or recourſe to that *Mercy*, immediately ſecures us from all *Retribution*. And how comfortable is it to be able to get rid of the troubleſome Idea of an *exact Retribution* from *immutable Juſtice*, which will not hold the *Guilty innocent?*

'Tis by inculcating ſuch a Syſtem, that Men are hardened againſt thoſe *juſt Fears* imprinted in their Minds, by a ſecret Sentiment; they have been inſenſibly accuſtomed to ſilence thoſe troubleſome Thoughts, and ſubſtitute in their room certain Opinions grounded on Scripture-Expreſſions. No Pretence has been made, however, for removing a *reſtraint* ſo

so necessary as that of *Fear*; on the contrary, we have been presented with the most *terrifying Idea*, which can enter the Imagination; that of an *everlasting Fire*. Can any thing exceed this? No certainly; but what is the Consequence of it? As it is frightful or *inconceivable*, it affects no Man. No one thinks himself deserving of a Punishment, which cannot even enter the Mind; and as soon as it is determined that no other is to be expected, what is more easy than to take courage against the secret Apprehensions which might make us fear the contrary?

Is it not evident then, that the Menace of *eternal Fire* is become a mere *Bug-bear?* It affrights Men for a moment; but cannot produce the least Effect either on the *Heart* or *Actions*.

Mr. *R* —— speaks of the horrible Confusion, which we should see in the World, if the Opinion of eternal Torments was discarded. I should be tempted to ask him, what sort of Confusion this wou'd be. Perhaps, he might say, of what are not Men capable, who are under no restraint from Religion or Fear *? But it has been proved that the Opinion in question

* Every one allows, that the Fear of Hell may serve to awaken Men, and keep them within Bounds to a certain degree; but the Question is, whether *Hell* ceases to be *Hell* the Moment we suppose it will have an *End:* Whether Torments endured many Ages, perhaps many Thousands of Years, are not sufficiently dreadful.

queſtion is more proper for deſtroying, than exciting a *juſt Fear*.

Let us conſider the matter in another Light. Men are capable of two ſorts of Diſorder; a *groſs* one, which appears by enormous Crimes; and a ſecret and *refined* one, hardly known even to the Perſons guilty of it. I aſk which of theſe Diſorders will be remedied by the Opinion of eternal Torments? Not that *refined Evil*, which is coloured over with the Appearance of *Good*. Men in this Caſe are very far from having any thing to fear. It muſt therefore be the *groſs* Diſorder which this Menace ſtops. Very well; but ſuppoſing there was no *human Juſtice*, no Priſons, nor *Gibbets*, do you imagine this Menace wou'd have much Force over the Mind? While Men can privately encroach on the Rights of others, enrich themſelves, or raiſe their Fortune on the Ruins of that of their Neighbours; I aſk whether the Idea of everlaſting Fire, proves a reſtraint to them or not. I do not here ſpeak of profligate Sinners, but of ſuch as paſs on the World for honeſt Men. Perhaps, the Idea of *an inevitable Retribution* *, if they did not ſtifle it, wou'd produce ſome Effect toward reſtrain-

* If the Idea of the Puniſhments of the other World was grounded on the Nature of Things, on the eſſential Connection between *Moral Evil* and *Pain*, between what we *ſow*, and what we *reap*; it would be impoſſible for Men to flatter themſelves with Impunity: whereas the groſs Idea of a Menace made by GOD, and which he may not put in execution, leaves them in a falſe Aſſurance, which ſtifles *true Fear*.

ing them; but as for *eternal Torments*, they are in good hopes of escaping them: some Acts of Injustice, of which we see so many Instances, can never deserve such a Punishment; besides, Repentance effaces all.

I would now fain know of Mr. *R*—— in what consists the Disorder, which the System of a *Restoration* might occasion? I imagine some will look on the matter in a different light, and think it were to be wished that Men were brought to *Good* by a *well-grounded Fear*. That they would learn to cultivate in themselves the Sentiments of *Justice*, which are the Work of the *Creator*, and which alone can lead them to real *Justice*.

POSTSCRIPT.

Allow me a Word or two on Mr. Professor's Conclusion.

" I will venture to affirm, says he, that " even though GOD had formed a Design " of executing his Menaces of eternal Tor- " ments with rigour, his *Wisdom* would have " engaged him to keep such a Design secret."

But he elsewhere tells us, that, " if the " *Justice* of GOD did not permit him to " *punish* the Wicked with eternal Torments, " his *Wisdom* would not have permitted him " to threaten them with such Torments." How is this to be reconciled?

Mr. *R*—— says likewise, " that if GOD " is pleased, notwithstanding his Menaces, " to shew the Damned some Favour, it is a " Mystery,

" Mystery, which he has revealed to no Man." Here he supposes the very thing in question *. But in short what does Mr. *R*—— infer from this? the following Admonition, which is the Conclusion of his whole Work.

" I would not, says he, advise any Sinner " to defer his Conversion 'till his Death, " much less till after his Death, and venture " his Salvation on a *May-be*." Was there any Necessity of writing a Book in order to come to this Conclusion? Or at least, was there any Necessity of confuting the Letters, in order to make his way to it? Do they advise the contrary? The Reader may judge of that.

If it appears that the Work confuted by Mr. *R*—— carries in it the same Conclusion †, more *naturally*, more *forcibly*, and more *incontestably*, one would be tempted to ask what can be the Tendency of ‖ the Confutation before us.

Answer to LETTER III.

SIR,

I Have read your last Letter, and shewn it Mr. *R*——. I was with him when he

* This Mystery is revealed to those who find it both in the Language of Scripture and that of all Nature.

† And other Conclusions, of no less importance; see *Letters* sixth, thirteenth and fourteenth.

‖ If Mr. *R*—— had concluded with demonstrating that the System of a *miserable Eternity* is more harmonious than that of a *Restoration*, more worthy of God, more advantageous to Mankind, better calculated for clearing up the Difficulties and Contradictions which divide Christians; such a Conclusion, I say, would have given more weight to his Confutation.

read it; and obſerved that how deſirous ſoever he might have been of juſtifying the Principles of Mr. *R*——, he knew not how to do it. He was obliged to ſay on more than one Occaſion, *This is evident*; *this admits of no Reply.*

However, having ſpent a little time in thinking on it, he ſaid the Author was indeed ſtrong in Reaſons and Demonſtrations; but that this did not prove he had Truth on his ſide: that we ought not to preſume our ſelves able to determine what would be *juſt* or *unjuſt* in the Conduct of GOD: that his *Ways* are not our *Ways*; that they are *incomprehenſible* to finite Underſtandings; that we muſt lay our Hand on our Mouth at the ſight of his Judgments; that St. *Paul* himſelf cries out, *O, the Depth!* In ſhort, that it is ſufficient for us to know GOD has decreed or determined a thing, for being aſſured it is juſt: that it becomes juſt by his ordaining it: that he was not obliged to give us an Account of his Conduct: that it is our buſineſs to obey, and not to attempt to penetrate into the Counſels of God.

I own that theſe Difficulties ſeemed to me ſo ſtrong, that I had not one Word to ſay in anſwer; and, if I may be allowed to ſpeak freely, I aſſure you, Sir, I am in ſome pain for you, and apprehend you will find it no eaſy matter to get over them.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

SIR,

YOU have indeed some reason to be in pain for me; I do not flatter myself with being able to give a full and compleat Answer to the Difficulties proposed by Mr. *N*——; this is an important Subject in Religion, and perhaps one of those which has been least explained.

Though there is something of the *True* in the Propositions before us, they occasion much of the *False*; or, at least, serve to colour it over. The Partizans of the opposite Sects make an equal use of them in their Disputes.

There is not one single Sect in which, to a certain point, Men will not lay down *Principles*, draw *Consequences*, prove what they advance, and oblige others to grant they have *Demonstration* on their side: but as soon as some Principle fit for disconcerting their *System* is offered, then recourse is had to the Maxims in question: they are very successfully employed for answering, that we ought to cry out, *O the Depth! lay your Hand on your Mouth: The Ways of God are not our Ways.*

In reality, nothing is more proper for commanding Silence; and this manner of speaking, at first sight, seems conclusive.

But as the same Maxims are equally used for maintaining both sides of the Question, there is reason to suppose they may be falsly applied; that these Propositions are in some particular Subjects applicable in an *absolute* sense and without restriction; that in some others, they may lead us into mistakes, if employed in the same manner.

Thus, might it not be concluded that there are some Subjects in Religion, in which we may and ought to require *Evidence?* as there are others with which we ought not to pretend to be thoroughly acquainted; and that by a just Distinction between one sort and the other, we shall find the most puzzling Difficulties vanish?

We are first to inquire, what are those *first Ideas*, and *certain Notions*, on which we may build, and which we can never call in question. Here, without doubt we are to expect *Evidence*, or, to express my self more properly, hence it ought to diffuse itself on all the *Consequences*, which would necessarily flow from it.

If, after this we should happen to meet with some Subjects, on which those first Ideas could not afford us any *positive* Instruction, we should leave in *Obscurity* whatever is not clearly unfolded, or surpasses our Understanding.

By *certain Notions* I mean such as are *Universal*; which are the same in *all* Men, though not equally unfolded in *all*. Men

Men are pretty well agreed on certain general Notions, when they are not concerned to defend the particular Syſtem they have eſpouſed. Thus they will readily grant that the Deity being *ſelf-ſufficient*, could have had no other End in eſtabliſhing Religion than the *Intereſt* of Mankind; that being pure *Goodneſs*, he can will only the Happineſs of his Creatures: that being ſovereign *Equity*, and conſequently *impartial*, he cannot will the *Happineſs* of ſome and the Miſery of others: in ſhort, that if he calls them all to Bliſs on certain Conditions, he muſt provide them all with *Means* of performing them.

Chuſe the moſt judicious Men out of all the Societies of the Chriſtian World; they will not refuſe to ſubſcribe to theſe *general Notions*. They will agree that they are the Dictates of good Senſe and of Truth itſelf.

Preſs them a little more cloſely; aſk them whether the Revelation, which they unanimouſly admit, can be *contrary* to theſe *Notions*; or whether it ought to be conformable to them; they will anſwer, that it muſt be conformable to them.

Go ſtill farther; make them obſerve the *Contradiction* between the *Syſtem* which they have embraced, and theſe *general Notions*. They will ſooner renounce them, than ſuffer the leaſt Violation of their Syſtem.

In this fixed Reſolution they will forget what they had before granted; *viz.* that *Revelation ought to be conformable to theſe univer-*

ſal Notions. Thence they will proceed to ſet the former in oppoſition to the latter, and ſoon give it the preference. Some particular *Terms*, which they have conſecrated, as proper for the Support of their Syſtem, muſt be made deciſive of the *True*.

I need not go very far for an Inſtance of this. The Sticklers for *abſolute Predeſtination* have conſecrated for their Uſe the Terms of *Election, Vocation, Reprobation, previous to any good or bad Action.*

Place the moſt *ſimple Notion* of the *infinite Goodneſs* and *perfect Equity*, which they have admitted, in oppoſition to the Senſe they give their favourite Terms. No matter; we muſt here *draw the Curtain*, and cry out, *O, the Depth!* Our Notions of the *divine Equity* and *Impartiality* may deceive us; whereas the oppoſite Expreſſions are deciſive. *Jacob have I loved, and Eſau have I hated.* We muſt ſtop here, and remain on the Brink of the Abyſs.

The Votaries of the *Roman* Church are of the ſame ſtamp. The Terms which they have conſecrated for their own Uſe, are the invariable Rule which determines the *True* and the *Falſe*, *Salvation* and *Damnation.* All the Scripture ſays of the *Church*, is applicable only to their own: all it ſays of true Paſtors, regards only their Doctors: the Elect are to be found only in their Communion. Confront this with the moſt ſimple Ideas of *univerſal Goodneſs*, and *ſovereign Equity*, which cannot

cannot have *limited*, or attach'd Salvation to one *Sect* or *Party*; this is nothing to the purpose; *Here the Curtain is to be drawn: No Salvation out of the Church.* Here we must stop; the Maxim is undoubted.

The Generality of Christians, who have hitherto maintain'd the Eternity of Hell, have likewise taken some particular Expressions for the Rule of the *True*; such as *everlasting Fire, the Worm that dieth not.* These Expressions have been allow'd the Preference to the most simple Notions, not only of *Universal Goodness*, but even to that of *sovereign Justice.* In answer to this, tell them that the Idea of *Justice* and that of Equity, are but one and the same thing: that *Equity* requires a perfect *Equality*, or at least a full *Compensation*, an exact *Proportion* between the *Fault* and the *Punishment:* make them observe that an Infinity of Creatures culpable in some degree, such as *wild* and *barbarous* People, *&c.* cannot have deserved eternal Punishment. No matter. *Here the Curtain must be drawn:* the Expression of *everlasting Fire* is positive. We ought to adore the divine Justice in its Judgments, and not pretend to be wiser than GOD. Have not those Christians of different Countries, who have excluded all *Pagans*, *Jews*, and *Mahometans* from Salvation on this single Declaration, *There is no other Name given unto Men, whereby they may be saved*, made the most *simple*

Ideas of *universal Goodness*, and that *sovereign Equity*, which *will render to every Man according to his Works*, and judge every Creature by the Use he has made of his Knowledge; have they not, I say, made them give way to some *Expressions?*

What are we to think of the Contradiction between these two ways of speaking? Which shall we consider as *true?* That by which Men *unanimously*, and without hesitation, assent to the *same Truths*; or that by which they prove *inconsistent* with themselves, for no other *Reason*, but the support of their own Systems, and without any other *Demonstration* than that equivocal Maxim, *We must lay our Hand on our Mouth, and not attempt to penetrate into the Decrees of God?*

These Examples make evident what I before advanced; that this Maxim, taken in a wrong Sense, gives those who make use of it room to settle and confirm themselves in the *False*. Let us agree, that it is much more easy to perceive the *false Applications* made of it, than exactly distinguish the *true Use* of it. This is the nice and difficult Point.

Let us here recollect the *evident* Maxims on which we have said all Men are agreed, when not on their guard. It is necessary to enumerate them once more.

First, That the Deity, being *self-sufficient*, could have no other *End* in establishing Religion,

Religion, than the *Intereſt* of Mankind.

Secondly, That, being pure *Goodneſs*, he can will only the *Happineſs* of his Creatures.

Thirdly, That, being *ſovereign Equity*, and conſequently *impartial*, he cannot will the *Happineſs* of ſome, and the *Miſery of* others.

Laſtly, That if he calls them *all* to *Happineſs*, on certain Conditions, he muſt provide *all* with Means to perform them.

Theſe Propoſitions are grounded on the Idea we conceive of the Divine *Goodneſs* and *Equity*. Muſt the Curtain be drawn over theſe? Muſt we cry out, O the *Depth!* and add, that it is not our buſineſs to judge here of the Equity of GOD? Are we ſenſible what would be the Conſequence of all this? There would then be nothing certain, either in *Religion* or civil *Society*. If Men do not find the Rule of the *Juſt* within themſelves, they will never be able to agree on any thing; they will have no *fixt* Principle to build on. This being ſuppoſed, the whole *Foundation* of the Security of States and Families will be deſtroyed: the *Laws*, which are eſſentially founded on the ſame *Ideas*, will loſe their *Force*. What a ſtrange *Chaos* would be the Conſequence of this!

If we really find within ourſelves the *Idea* of the *Juſt*, of whom do we hold it? Is it our own Work? If ſo, unjuſt Men would not find it within themſelves. It is there how-

ever; and as soon as they vouchsafe to consult it, they find it as a Rule which corrects them.

But, in short, can we doubt that GOD is at the same time the *Original* and the *Cause* of the *Just* *? If he has been pleased to make himself known to Men by it, ought we to silence the Testimony, which it bears of itself, with this equivocal Maxim, That *the ways of* GOD *are not our ways: that we are not to set bounds to his supreme Justice?* &c.

But here comes an Objection. Is not GOD *incomprehensible*, purely because he is *infinite?*

I answer, that the Understanding of Man, though limited, has an Idea of the *Infinite negatively*. This Idea is *simple*; and though it infinitely surpasses his Understanding, he has a *Certainty* of it. The same is to be said of the Idea of *Eternity*, &c. Whence doth Man, born but the other day, derive the Idea of Eternity? he can hold it only of the *eternal Being*. These Ideas, so far as they are *negative*, may be called *Notions*. Whatever Name is bestow'd on them, they are not therefore less *real:* they are a sufficient Demonstration that the Understanding of Man,

* Man finds in himself Ideas which represent Perfections, of which he is not Master. He has an Idea of *infinite Goodness*, or *perfect Equity*. He himself is neither *good* nor *equitable*. Every Perfection of which he has an *Idea* only without the *Reality*, must reside in the Author of his Being.

Man, though *bounded*, entertains Ideas, which *surpass* it, and which ought to make him go back to him who is the Original of them.

To come now to the Idea of *Equity:* I say it is rather *negative* than *positive**. The Term *Just* literally denotes neither *too much* nor *too little:* those of *Equity*, *Equality*, and *Proportion*, all stand for one and the same thing. It is evident therefore, that the *Equity* of GOD is one of the Attributes, which we most easily conceive †: that even what is *infinite* in it ‖, doth not exceed our Understanding.

The

* We have more exact Ideas of what is *unjust*, than of what is *just* in the *positive* Sense. We may, with more certainty, affirm that such or such a thing is *not just*, than we can precisely distinguish what *Justice requires*. When a Tradesman or Artificer has employed his time and labour in serving a Man of Fortune, without receiving any Recompence, we readily pronounce that this is not just. Were we to determine the *Degree* of the Recompence he deserves, we could not judge of the matter with so much Certainty.

† It was necessary that Men should have more exact Ideas of the divine *Equity* than of the other Attributes of GOD; because that Idea is the true Foundation of *Order*. The Idea of *Equity* is stampt on all Men in so *ineffaceable* a manner, that it alone has an *unexceptionable* Authority over them. When Children complain of their Parents, Servants of their Masters, Subjects of their Prince; this is always done under pretence that they are not equitable.

‖ The Term *infinite*, join'd to that of *Equity*, makes no addition to it. It is even improper. We say *infinite Goodness*, *infinite Wisdom:* we say *perfect Equity*, and the word *perfect* in this respect, signifies only the *Perfection of Equality*.

The Idea of *Goodneſs* is at the ſame time both *poſitive* and *ſimple*; conſequently it is *invariable*. It is not in our power to doubt that the firſt Being is *Good*; we find in ourſelves the Idea of a *Goodneſs*, of which we are not poſſeſſed; this Idea again refers us to the Original.

It is now time to ſpeak of the Idea of *Wiſdom*. Is it *poſitive* or *negative?* I anſwer, that it is partly both; but that Men can know it only by its *Negative* *. In that reſpect, they have an Idea of a Wiſdom, which *cannot miſcarry*, which foreſees all things, and employs an *infinite* diverſity of Means for attaining its *End*. Will they attempt to take a nearer view of it, all they *comprehend* of it is, that it is *incomprehenſible*; or if they are raſh enough to pretend to *penetrate* into what is beyond their *Sphere*, inſtead of finding *Evidence*, they meet with nothing but *Chimæra's*, which are the effect of their own Invention.

Here

* The Queſtion doth not here turn on the *Wiſdom*, which appears in the Works of *Nature*; that is *clearly ſeen*, as St. *Paul* expreſſes it, *Rom.* i. 20. and though Men are unacquainted with the *Springs* of it in ſeveral reſpects, they know enough of it to make it the Subject of their Admiration. We are now ſpeaking of that *Wiſdom* which governs Mankind; a *Wiſdom* which St. *Paul* calls *hidden*; which for arriving at its *Ends*, takes ways *unknown* to Men; which *diſguiſes* itſelf from their Eyes ſo much, that they take it for *Folly*. St. *Paul* ſpeaking of this *Wiſdom*, ſays, that *the Princes of this World have not known it; for if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.*

Here the Maxim, That *the ways of* GOD *are not our ways*, is perfectly in its place. *The Curtain must be drawn* over the *incomprehensible Springs*, which it puts into motion, and of which we know not the *particular Design*. Here we are to cry out, *O, the Depth!* Accordingly St. *Paul's* Exclamation is made on a Subject of this nature. He had, through that whole Chapter, been speaking of the *Jews* and the *Gentiles:* he had insinuated that the former were rejected only for a time: He had even declared, as a *Mystery*, that all *Israel shall be saved*. After which, considering within himself the *infinite Springs*, which the divine Wisdom must employ in the execution of that vast Design, he cries out, *O, the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of* GOD! *How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out!* Rom. xi. 33.

He had said, in the foregoing Verse, GOD *hath concluded them all in Unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.* 'Tis a design so great as this, that made the subject of his Admiration; what he calls *unsearchable*, or *incomprehensible*, are the different ways employ'd by *Wisdom* for putting it in execution. He insinuates that on seeing it *act*, no Man would suspect the *End* it proposes; *Who hath known the Mind of the Lord*, saith he,

or who hath been his Connſellor? v. 34*. *For*, adds he, in the laſt Verſe, by way of Concluſion, *of him and through him, and to him are all things; to whom be Glory for ever.*

Here I meet with freſh Proofs of a *Reſtoration* in my way; Proofs which I had not before in my thoughts. Doth this Concluſion, after what precedes it, leave us any doubt of GOD's deſign on all Men?

Before we can be perſuaded that all *Men* will not return to their *Origin*, it muſt be proved that *all* Men did not derive their *Exiſtence* from GOD; that they do not ſubſiſt *in him.* So too, before we can be perſuaded that *all Men* will not at laſt obtain *Mercy*, it ought to be proved that all Men were not *concluded in Unbelief.*

You will be pleaſed to obſerve, Sir, that St. *Paul*'s Exclamation, which Mr. *N*—— preſſes againſt the Syſtem of a *Reſtoration*, is the ſame that brings me back to it. I doubt whether his Objections will appear to carry any great Force in them, after what I have here ſaid.

If

* In reality, Men of the ſame temper with thoſe of former times (I ſpeak chiefly of the *Jews*) and the majority of the Chriſtians at preſent, would have been far from giving ſuch Counſel. The *Jews* thought themſelves highly *injured* when *ranked* with the *Gentiles.* Such an Aſſociation would have appeared to them the greateſt Offence that could be committed againſt them. The Chriſtians of our Days are *ſcandalized*, when they are told that *all Men* are deſtined to be one day Partakers of the *ſame Happineſs.*

If we ought not to presume ourselves able to determine what would be *just* or *unjust* in the Conduct of GOD, this concerns only the *Detail* of his Conduct, the *particular* Ends of which we know not; and this is comprehended in the means employ'd by infinite Wisdom.

But as to the *general Ends* proposed by the Deity, which must be grounded on perfect *Goodness* and *perfect Equity*, we may, without being guilty of too much Presumption, judge whether they are *just* or not. GOD himself invites us to make this Judgment.

He refers us to the *Rule* which he has fixed in us, for judging of the Equity of his ways. *Ezek.* xviii. 25, 29. So far is he from stopping Men's mouths, when his Equity is to be defended, that he pleads his Cause before them. *Micah* vi. 1, 2. He knows *he shall be justified.* Rom. iii. 4.

Mr. *N*—— supposes a thing becomes just because GOD ordains it. Perhaps he has not well expressed his meaning. I think it might rather be said, that *he ordains it because it is just.* Otherwise, what can be the meaning of all the repeated Testimonies which *David*, *Moses*, and other Prophets bear of GOD, when they say *his Laws are just*; that they are *established on Equity?* Do not these Expressions suppose that the *Just* and the *Equitable* subsist independent of his Laws*? That Men

* If it be allowed that no Man doubts of it, I desire no more; since the Supposition that *we cannot judge* what would be just or unjust in GOD, is grounded only on that Doubt.

Men have an Idea of them, and that they bear this Testimony of his *Laws* by the relation they find between them and that *Idea*. This Idea is as the *Original* in their Minds; the *Laws* are only a *Representation* of it.

I think it would be superfluous to enlarge any more on this Subject; it is fertile in Consequences; and I leave you and Mr. *N*—— the pleasure of deducing them more at large.

Answer *to* LETTER IV.

SIR,

MR. *N*—— and I have read your Answer to his Difficulties. He seems to me satisfied with it; and desires I will let you know he has no farther Objections to offer, at least to the *Enquiry into Origenism*; that is, he is of opinion that you have entirely confuted it.

However, he is not inclined to let you come off so. He finds you have laid down some Principles, the Consequences of which might deserve an Explanation. According to him, you have been too short on the Article of *Wisdom*. He maintains that you ought to have added two or three Pages to your Letter; and that you have not sufficiently inquired into the Causes which render the ways of Wisdom *impenetrable*, while there is nothing in divine *Goodness* and *Equity*, that surpasses our Understanding.

Here,

Here, Sir, is Work cut out for you. If there is any Indiſcretion in the Demand, I hope you will not make me anſwerable for it. I muſt own, however, that I am not diſpleaſed at Mr. *N*———'s being indiſcreet; and perhaps, had he not been ſo, I ſhould have ventured incurring your Cenſure on that ſcore, rather than not engage you to give an Anſwer.

LETTER V.

SIR,

I Should have thought it an Injuſtice to your Penetration, as well as to that of Mr. *N*—, to unfold the Conſequences of the Principles I have laid down. I know not whether it may not be more difficult for me to do it in writing, than for you to ſee them at one view. I find my ſelf but little diſpoſed to attempt it; and therefore beg leave, by way of relaxation, to communicate to you a little Scene of which I have been Witneſs this day.

I went to Mr. *N*——'s a famous Watch-maker of this City, in order to purchaſe a Watch. He was not at home; but I was told he would return very ſoon. I reſolved to wait for him; and as I was walking in his Shop, I look'd on ſeveral Pendulum Clocks, and other Pieces of his making. His little Family and ſome neighbouring Children were diverting themſelves with ſtriking the Clocks, and Repeating-

peating-Watches; whereupon I undertook to ask them some little Questions, that I might hear them prattle.

I first ask'd them the names of those several Machines. To which they all replied at once, they were Clocks and Watches. What is the use of them, said I? They immediately told me, to shew the Hours. But, asked I, what is the use of that striking? The eldest of them answer'd, it was that People might know how the time passed in the Night. I farther inquired of those last mentioned, what was the use of the little Machine that hung at the end of the Chain. That is the *Key*, replied they, for winding it up every day at the same hour. Here, said I, are Children, who will soon know as much of the matter as their Father. They had no difficulty in believing me.

I then asked them whether they were acquainted with the use of several little Machines scatter'd on a Table. They boldly assured me they were; but when I attempted to press them a little farther on the particular use of each of those Machines, the Scene became diverting. Each of them told his Opinion, and began to support it with warmth. One would have it, that the Chain was a Necklace for his Baby: another, that one of the Wheels was made for his little Coach where it was wanting; in short, the smallest Machine on the Table found a place in the Brain of these Children, according to their different Inclinations.

The

The Diſpute grew ſerious and warm; the Father came in, and put an end to it; neither of them gained his point, as he pretended. To conclude the whole affair, they were told they ought to be ſatisfied, till a certain age, with knowing what hour it is by a Watch, without troubling themſelves about the Springs which put it in motion.

This Scene furniſhed me with matter for Reflection. I conſider'd it as a pretty ſtrong Emblem of what we have hitherto ſeen in regard to Religion. It made me recollect the Subject of my laſt Letter: and I even think it might ſuggeſt ſomething in anſwer to Mr. *N*——'s laſt Difficulty.

He aſks, why Men have more *certain* Ideas concerning the *general Ends* propoſed by the Deity, than of the *Springs*, which *Wiſdom* employs for attaining thoſe *Ends*.

The Scene of the Clocks will give us ſome light into the affair. It appear'd that the Children, who acted in it, entertain'd juſt Ideas of the *general Deſign* of their Father's Works: They readily and unanimouſly anſwer'd the Queſtions relating to that only: Their Reply concerning the Uſe to be made of thoſe Works was likewiſe very juſt. But, when they came to conſider the little Machines, which are as it were the *Soul* of the *Clocks*, ſeparately from the *Clocks* themſelves; they did not comprehend what relation thoſe different Machines might bear to a Clock. Being accuſtomed

accuſtomed to ſee only the *Outſide* or Surface of Clocks and Watches, their little Brains could not conceive the uſe of ſo many *hidden Springs*. They immediately look'd for ſuch uſes of them as were moſt within their reach, and moſt material to them: nothing concerning them more than their Toys and Play-things, each of them pitched on that Piece which was proper for his little Manufacture. Such as could not be converted to the ſame Uſe, were deſpiſed as ſo many uſeleſs Pieces, as ſo much Trumpery.

I lately obſerved to you, that Men are agreed on *ſimple* and *univerſal Notions*: that they are unanimous in their Anſwer concerning their Idea of the *ſupreme Goodneſs* and *Equity:* That they are divided only on the *Detail*, and the *fix'd* Reſolution they have formed of adapting it to their own *particular Syſtems*.

Two Cauſes may be aſſigned for their Diviſion: Their *Ignorance* of the *ſecret Springs*, which exceed their Underſtanding; and the *Reſolution* of making uſe of them at any rate, for the ſupport of the Opinions of their *Party*. While theſe two *Cauſes* ſubſiſt, how is it poſſible to reconcile Men? *Ignorance* alone would throw no Obſtacle in the way; but *Ignorance* join'd to a *Preſumption* of comprehending every thing, forms the moſt invincible Obſtacle.

I ſhould here be tempted to advance this Propoſition; *viz.* That the generality of Chriſtians have employ'd their whole Application in attempting to comprehend this *Detail* of things of which they ought to be *ignorant*, or which they ought to leave in *ſuſpenſe*; while they have neglected ſuch as they ought to *know*, or at leaſt, have not taken care to *know them as they ought*, to know them by *Sentiment* and the force of *Evidence*.

All Men have within themſelves the true Principles of Religion. Theſe are thoſe *firſt Ideas*, thoſe *univerſal Notions*, mention'd in my fourth Letter. *Revelation* was not given with a view of rendering theſe firſt Notions uſeleſs; much leſs with that of contradicting them. Its Deſign was to refer Men to them, and explain them.

Had Chriſtians made this uſe of Revelation; had they ſtopped at what it teaches, in conformity with theſe *Notions*; could they have reſolved to be ignorant of the *Detail* of an Infinity of things, or at leaſt have left in *ſuſpenſe* what is not clearly unfolded; what Rocks would they not have avoided?

The great Ends propoſed by the Deity in regard to Mankind are very *ſimple*, and conſequently within the reach of human Underſtanding. But the ways taken by his *Wiſdom* for attaining to thoſe Ends, are *infinitely various**, and thus become impenetrable to a *limited*

* St. *Paul* calls it a Wiſdom *various* in every Way. The Diverſity of the Ways of *Wiſdom* has been ſhewn by

mited Mind. They are the *Thoughts* of GOD, raiſed as far above the *Thoughts* of *Men*, as *infinite* is above *finite*.

A Child or a Peaſant knows the Sun is made for giving Light; but they know not *how* it enlightens. They know the Eye is made for ſeeing, but are ignorant of the *ſecret Structure* of that Organ, which renders it capable of ſeeing. How many things are there, of whoſe Exiſtence we cannot doubt, though it is not poſſible for us to explain the *How?*

A Child may comprehend his Father's *Deſign* in his greateſt Undertakings; whether he propoſes to build a City, to enrich it, or eſtabliſh Laws to the advantage of all its Inhabitants. How important ſoever the Deſign may be, the Idea of it is *ſimple* enough, and

by the different Forms it has aſſumed in the different Oeconomies.

In the Oeconomy of Nature, it made itſelf known by *Nature* itſelf.

In the ſecond Oeconomy, it was diſguiſed, ſo as hardly to be known, by an Infinity of *Laws, foreign* to human Nature, and much more ſo by Orders ſeemingly *unjuſt*; but it was ſupported by ſo glorious an Authority, by ſo invincible a Power and Force, that Men in thoſe times could not but ſee the *Finger* of GOD.

Under the Oeconomy of the Goſpel, it took the contrary Form, or rather, appear'd without *Form*, without *Grandeur*, without *Splendor*, without *Power*, without *Authority*. It permitted its Children to ſink under the violence of Perſecution. This is what St. *Paul* terms *the Fooliſhneſs* of GOD, *the Weakneſs of* GOD, 1 *Cor.* i. 25. Could *Wiſdom* be more effectually diſguiſed than under the Appearance of *Folly?*

and contains nothing but what a Child may conceive.

The Case is not the same in regard to the Execution of it. That includes so great a *Diversity* of *Means*, requires a Foresight and a Wisdom so fertile in *Expedients* and *Contrivances*, that the Child can entertain no Idea of it. The Measures, which he sees his Father take, are so many Riddles to him; he is quite bewilder'd by those which unite in putting several *Springs* in motion at once.

What particularly renders the ways of divine Wisdom impenetrable, is, that it frequently seems to turn its back on its *End*; and yet that is the very way it *reaches* it. The sacred History furnishes us with Examples of this kind.

The History of *Joseph* is one. I shall suppose that during his Infancy, GOD had reveal'd to him his *Design*, the *End* he proposed of making this Child the Delieverer of his Family. I suppose, I say, that GOD made mention only of his *End*, and not of the Ways he would take for leading him to it. I farther suppose, some particular Man, desirous of seeing all that should happen to *Joseph*; that with that view he should undertake to follow him through all the Revolutions of his Life. He first observes the Hatred his Brethren bear him; his Father's Tenderness seems a Counterpoise to that. The Dreams, which he hears him relate, and which foretel his

Promotion, confirm him in the Opinion that it will infallibly come to pass. And yet those very *Dreams* increase the Hatred of his Brethren, and put them on selling him. Here our Man is bewilder'd.

He follows *Joseph* into *Egypt*, he accompanies him to *Potiphar*'s House. *Joseph*'s Success in his Master's Family begins to afford him some hope: which entirely vanishes, when he sees him accused of a heinous Crime and imprisoned. What steps are here towards his becoming a *Deliverer*, and a *Deliverer of his Family!* It seems lost to him, as he is to it: the time passes on, his Fortune continues the same. The Interpretation of the Dreams of two of *Pharaoh*'s Servants, which seemed to tend to a Change in his favour, leaves him still two Years in Prison. At last, *Pharaoh*'s Dreams begin to open a new Scene. *Joseph* becomes the Deliverer of a Kingdom; but the main point is wanting. He still continues lost to his Family: he hears no news of them in eight Years after his Promotion: and his Father has now mourned for him nineteen.

Jacob on the point of his greatest Joy, finds his Afflictions doubled. The Famine is a Trifle to him: he is in danger of being deprived of Children: his dear *Benjamin* is taken from him, he has nothing to do but die; and yet at that critical Moment, he passes from the bittereſt Grief to the greatest Joy he had ever known in his Life.

Had

Had we been Spectators of such a Series of Revolutions during the course of nineteen Years, should we not often have lost all hope? Would not *Means* so *contrary* to such an *End*, have puzzled and confounded us? Now we have seen the *End*, it is easy for us to admire the *Ways* of Wisdom, which knows how to arrive at its Ends by *Contraries* and *Opposites*. We are forced to own that these thorny Roads lead to a greater Happiness: and that *Goodness* for that reason allows us to travel through them. It appears then in this Case that *Goodness* and *Wisdom* concurred. But did *Justice* act in concert with them? What *Injustice* did it not permit? An innocent Person imprisoned like a Criminal! But wait the Event: *Justice* will not lose its right; it will more than *compensate* all the Sufferings of the Innocent, with a *Glory* which he had never acquired without these *Sufferings*. It will bring the *Agents* of *Injustice* to his Feet: it will make them feel the *Retribution* of their Violence by grievous Remorse; in short, they shall owe their Lives to him whom they would have killed. Can a more complete Compensation be imagined?

This Account is satisfactory in the whole. It justifies the Divine *Goodness*, *Justice* and *Wisdom*; and were we to be only bare Spectators of such a Scene, it wou'd be easy to admire it. But there are long Periods in Life, in which we find nothing but *Contrarieties*,

without preceiving the *End* of them; and in such Case it is not easy to be willing to depend on a *Wisdom*, which we should be tempted not to acknowledge.

What this and such like Histories * represent to the View *in little*, is what happens at *full length*, and the *End* of it is reserved for the World to come.

For the same reason, there are an Infinity of Particulars in the Conduct of Providence, which *to us appear unjust*. The greatest part of the Events related in the Scripture †, do not justify it. Profane History presents us with Tragical Spectacles, which give room for doubting whether the Deity regards what passes among Men. Nor does the sacred History furnish us with Difficulties less considerable. So many *Massacres* of whole Nations, not only permitted, but commanded by

* The History of *Moses*, those of *David*, *Job*, *Esther* and *Daniel*, have in the whole some resemblance with that of *Joseph*. They are so many Pictures, or rather rough Draughts of the ways of the same *Wisdom*. All these were conducted to Happiness, through Roads which they wou'd never have chosen, and which on the contrary seem'd to carry them from it.

† The whole History of the Old Testament is full of such Events. We cannot, without Astonishment, observe the unheard-of Severity, exercised by the *Israelites*, by the Command of GOD, on all the *Canaanites* without exception; as also several others, where the Children are punished with their Fathers, Subjects with their Prince; where GOD calls one Generation to an account for what passed in the foregoing Age.

by Divine Wiſdom! How ſhall we reconcile this with the Idea of Equity? Were it allowable to quote a Paſſage from *Eſop*, it might ſtand for an Anſwer to this Queſtion: *In all things the End is to be conſidered.*

The *End* will *unravel* all, and what has in this Life appear'd to us moſt contrary to the ſupreme *Wiſdom* and *Equity*, will be the ſubject of Admiration to intelligent Beings. We are not to judge of the *Cauſe* by *equivocal Effects*, of which we know not the *particular End*, but of the *Effects* by the *Cauſe* itſelf, of which we know the *general Deſign*.

This is the only Conſideration, that can make us ſatisfied with ſo many Events, in all appearance unjuſt. This *general End* propoſed by the Divinity, this *abſolute Deſign* of bringing all Men to Happineſs at laſt, is ſufficient for making us eaſy; and though we cou'd not conceive the Connexion which ſuch or ſuch Effects may have with the *general End*, it matters not; without comprehending them diſtinctly, we in the main conceive that *impenetrable Wiſdom* can never loſe ſight of its *End*; and that what ſeems moſt *contrary* to the *End* propoſed, helps to promote it.

Here now is the *fixed Point*, on which we may depend, and in which all terminates. This *Point of View* once removed, every things falls to the ground: we have no longer any *certain Principle:* we loſe the *Idea* of

the *perfect Being**; every thing appears to us a Dream. For, in short, whatever efforts of Imagination we may make, will it be possible for us to think Events like those just mentioned, equitable, if we consider them separately from the *general* Design of the Deity to make all Mankind *happy?*

The Sticklers for the old System, pretend to justify the Equity of GOD several ways. They tell us in loose Terms, that GOD will justify his *Wisdom* and *Equity*, by a perfect *Compensation.* When they are pressed concerning this *Compensation*, when they are asked what this *unravelling* will be; they say, GOD *will be glorified by his Justice in the Damnation of the Wicked, as he will by his Mercy in the Salvation of the Good.*

Is such an *unravelling* sufficient for solving all the Difficulties, which present themselves concerning the Conduct of Providence? 'Tis certain that it is not in every Man's power to be satisfied with it, and that such *Solutions* are so far from making the Testimony of Scripture venerable, that they have produced the contrary Effect on several; on such, I mean, as require at least some *sort of Evidence*, something fixed, on which they may depend. Ought

* If we cannot depend on it, as on an undoubted Principle, that there is neither *Rage* nor *Cruelty* in GOD; that what to us seems so in his Conduct, will terminate at last in the Happiness of those Creatures, who have felt the Severity of them, what Idea shall we have of the *perfect Being?*

Ought this Diſpoſition to be charged with *Irreligion* and *Raſhneſs?* I think not. But it may be ſaid, there are ſeveral things in Religion for which we are not to require *Evidence*. I am of the ſame Opinion; this very Perſuaſion engages me to demand it in things which may be ſuſceptible of it.

If I have no Evidence concerning the *eſſential Attributes* of the Deity; how can I have any concerning the *Divinity of the Scripture?* and, if I have no *Certainty* that it is *Divine*, what obliges me to receive its Deciſions without *Evidence?* Shall I hold it to be Divine on the Teſtimony of Men? No, it may be anſwer'd; you ſhall know it to be ſuch by the *Divine Characteriſtics*, by *the grand Ideas* it gives you of the *Juſtice* and *Wiſdom* of the perfect Being. Very well; on that foot, I ought to have the Idea of *Divine** before the Scripture imprints the Character of it in my Mind. In like manner, I have an Idea of the *Goodneſs*, *Juſtice* and *Wiſdom* of the perfect Being, ſince I am obliged to aſſent to what the ſame Scripture ſays of them. This is the *Evidence* I require. Is there any raſhneſs in demanding an Evidence of this nature? If I am obliged to believe what GOD ſays, without a complete Evidence, I muſt at leaſt be firſt aſſured that GOD has ſaid it. In this Caſe, I ſhall have ſome ſort of Evidence,

* We can know a Man by his *Picture*, only from the *Idea*, we before had of him.

on which I may depend; I shall judge of the *Uncertain* by the *Certain*.

But it may be said, it is not enough to *know* that GOD has *said* such or such a thing, we ought likewise to *know* in what *Sense* he has said it. Is not this kind of Evidence as necessary as the former? I think not. To pretend to have *Evidence* for *all sorts of things*, is the way to destroy the *true* one, that which ought to serve as the *Basis* of our *Judgments*.

If I do really know the Scripture to be Divine by the *Divine Characteristics* *, I shall consider only what relates to those *Characteristics*, as *evident Truths*.

When it *seems* to speak a contratry Language, I shall take it for granted, that the *Certain* cannot be shaken by the *Uncertain*; that ambiguous Expressions cannot obscure Evidence; and, without giving myself any Concern for determining the *Meaning* of such Expressions,

* Nothing is plainer than this. It is natural that the Rule by which I know the Scripture to be *Divine*, should be the same, which serves to give me the *Meaning* of it. I know the Scripture to be *Divine*, by *Divine Characteristics*. Therefore, I will not ascribe to it any Sense contrary to those *Divine Characteristics*. For Example; The Scripture says, GOD *wills not that any one should perish, but that all should come to Repentance.* It says, GOD *hardens whom he will harden: It is impossible that those, who have been illuminated, should be renewed by Repentance.*

Here now are two contradictory Propositions. I ask which of them bears a *Divine Character?*

Expreſſions, it will be ſufficient for me to know, what they *do not ſignify**.

I will make uſe of the ſame Rule in all manner of Subjects, in proportion as they have more or leſs Evidence.

I will content myſelf with ſeeing thoſe things in a *general* manner, whoſe *Particularities* I cannot diſcover. I will reſolve to be *ignorant* of what ſeems to me *impenetrable*. I will attend leſs to the *Detail* and *Circumſtances* than to the *Subſtance* of things; and without being ſurpriſed at ſeeming Contradictions, which certainly lie only in the Terms, I will fix my Eyes on the *general Deſign*, which never *varies*.

Do not the Diviſions among Chriſtians ariſe from their having taken the contrary Method? Had they been content with an Evidence of this kind, how many Controverſies would have been avoided? For, in ſhort, they are grounded on *Expreſſions*, on Men's pretending to determine in what ſenſe GOD hath ſaid ſuch or ſuch a thing †.

* For Example;
The Scripture ſays, *The Lord revengeth and is furious*, Nahum i. 2. It ſays elſewhere, *Fury is not in me*, Iſaiah xxvii. 4.

Which of theſe two Propoſitions, taken literally, bears a *Divine Character?* What then; you will ſay, can theſe contradictory Propoſitions ſignify? It is ſufficient for me to know what they *do not ſignify*.

† JESUS CHRIST ſaid, *This is my Body*. Here then is Tranſubſtantiation.

I find, Sir, that your Objections, or those of Mr. *N*——, have insensibly led me farther than I designed to go. I am persuaded, it will not now be necessary to beg you wou'd both think, I have discharged the Task imposed on me. If I have not sufficiently explain'd the Subject proposed by Mr. *N*——, I leave you that Employment. Besides, there are some Truths here, of which it is more easy to perceive the Force, than to enumerate them as one ought.

The Answer to the Fifth LETTER.

SIR,

MR. *N*——— and I allow it is just you should be discharged. Your last Letter gives a wide scope for Thought. You are troubled with this on account of a small Curiosity which has seized us both.

The Letter concerning a *Deist*, which appears at the end of the Fourteen Letters, mentions a Conversation, which preceded it; but that is all it says of the matter. I think I have heard

He said, *Thou art* Peter, *and on this Rock*, &c. Therefore the Pope is Head of the Church.

The Scripture says, *That* GOD *makes some Vessels to Honour, and others to Dishonour.*

Here then are absolute Election and Reprobation.

It says, *There is no Name, but that of* JESUS CHRIST, *by which Men can be saved.* Therefore, all *Pagans*, *Jews* and *Mahometans* are damned, and damned eternally; for it is likewise said, *That the Fire of Hell shall not be extinguished.*

heard you say, you have seen an Account of it. If it is still in your hands, I flatter myself that you will be pleased to send it us. It is to be hoped, this will be the last Trouble we shall give you.

LETTER VI.

SIR,

IN Consideration of the Promise you make me, and which I beg you will remember; I send you the Account you desire, which, as you will see, employs two Letters. Several Persons have seem'd to wish they had been published with the other Letter concerning the *Deist*. That wou'd have been natural, as these were written first.

Some, perhaps, will be of opinion that these Letters, which are in the historical way, wou'd have been foreign to the Work; whereas that, which has appear'd at the end of it, is a sort of *Analysis*, which is so far from carrying the Reader from the Subject, that it collects the whole System, as it were, into one Point. Whatever becomes of this Question, I am assured you will thank me for the Copies I send you; and that after you have perused these Letters, you will have a fresh Pleasure in giving the other a second Reading, as it contains the Solution of the Difficulties proposed in these.

An Account of a Converſation with a DEIST.

LETTER I.

SIR,

I Was the other day in Company, where I chanced to meet with a Gentleman till then unknown to me, who ſeem'd to be a Foreigner. I underſtood by his diſcourſe that he had been a great Traveller. The ſeveral Queſtions aſked him concerning his Travels, gave him occaſion to talk pretty much; but no one could find out what Religion he profeſſed. One of the Gentlemen had the Curioſity to aſk him. I am, ſaid he, an *honeſt Man*; my Travels have diſabuſed me of all other Religion. You are to know, by the way, that the Company was compoſed partly of *Roman Catholics*, and partly of *Proteſtants*. Both were equally ſurpriz'd at this Anſwer. It even occaſion'd ſilence for ſome moments; no-body was willing to be the firſt that called on him to explain himſelf. An *Officer* told him with a low Voice, that he might have kept his Thoughts to himſelf; that ſuch a Declaration gave ſeveral Perſons room for entertaining diſadvantageous Ideas of him. I think, anſwer'd he, that every honeſt Man may be allow'd to ſay what he thinks, and appear what he really is. I have no great

Eſteem

Esteem for those *hidden* Gentlemen, whose real Sentiments it is impossible to know.

This bold manner of delivering himself inspired the rest of the Company with Courage. Are you, says an *Abbot*, one of those whom we call *Atheists?* No, answers the Stranger, I acknowledge a *Deity*. You are a *Deist* then, replied the *Abbot*. A *Deist*, if you please, says the Stranger. I am come to that, after having carefully inquired into all the Religions in the World.

How! replied an *Abbot*; did the Christian Religion appear unworthy of your Choice? But, says the Stranger, where shall I find it? A pretty Question! replies the *Abbot*; doth not the Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Religion bear all the Marks of it? Hold there, Sir, says a *Protestant*; those Marks belong to the Reformed Religion: It is entirely founded on the Holy Scripture. What Heresy! replied the *Abbot*; the Holy Scripture entirely on your side! It seems to favour you, only as you wrest it to serve your Turn. A *Lawyer*, who was present, asked the Stranger, whether he admitted of the Testimony of Scripture. What is the Scripture, says our Traveller? What sort of Language doth it speak? One assures me it says *White*, where others maintain it says *Black**. Which of them must I believe?

* This is the common Language of the *Deists*. The Contradictions, which they find between the different Opinions among Christians, embolden them to declare against.

believe? This Contradiction at last opened my Eyes. I concluded that the Case is the same in regard to the Scripture, as it is in regard to the Sound of Bells; each Man makes it speak what he thinks proper. Since the Gentleman sets no value on the Authority of Scripture, replied the *Lawyer*, it wou'd be in vain to urge it against him; I think the shortest way wou'd be to end the Dispute here.

Every one was not of his opinion. They ought not to let slip an Opportunity of converting an *Infidel*, a *Deist*; but the difficulty was, to find some competent Authority. That of Scripture was not such; some other must be thought of. This seem'd impossible; so that they were reduced to the necessity of giving up the Project, and leaving the *Deist* to himself.

This Scene occasion'd the following.

The *Deist* having taken his leave, the Company took full liberty with his Character. They bewail'd the misery of the times, in which Irreligion dares appear openly, and barefaced. In return to this, the *Officer* observ'd, that if Irreligion is to be fear'd, 'tis that which several Persons conceal under the Character of a Christian, much rather than that of a Man, who has the Courage to pass for a *Deist*, and thus gives every one an Opportunity of being on his guard: that Sentiments, *secretly insinuated* by Men, of whom we have no mistrust,

against the Scripture. They do not observe, that the Scripture is only the *Occasion*, not the *Cause* of such *Contradictions*.

trust, more certainly produce their Effect, than such as are *openly* declared. That, at least, it is a piece of Honesty not to attempt to deceive others. Some were of his opinion; and the *Lawyer*, among others, seconded him.

It was then inquired, what Method was to be taken for converting Persons of this Class. One was for beginning with proving the *Divinity* of the Scripture. Very well, says the *Lawyer*; when that is performed, shall we have made much progress in the Work? The difficulty will still be to determine the *Sense* of it. If this is not done, the *Deist* will reason thus:

I grant, says he, that the Scripture is *Divine*; that, consequently, it has some *Divine Sense*. Have you found this *Sense?* If you have, it ought to *reconcile* and *unite* you. If you have not, what use can you make of the *Divinity* of a *Book*, while you are ignorant of the Sense of it*?

Some of the Company flew into a Passion at this Discourse. They began to suspect both the *Lawyer* and the *Officer*; and after a pretty long Dispute, they parted with mutual Dissatisfaction.

What

* In reality, doubting of the Divinity of the Scripture is not what divides Christian Societies; all unanimously acknowledge this. The *opposite Senses*, which they imagine they find in it, is the only Source of their Contests; and those *opposite Senses*, are what serve the *Deists* as a *Pretext* for rejecting all use of the Scripture itself.

What had passed gave me room for Reflection. I shall not at present tell you every particular, that offer'd itself to my Mind, concerning the *Chaos* or Confusion which reigns among Christians. I chuse rather to communicate to you a Conversation I had the next day with the *Deist*, whom I met by chance.

I laid hold of this Opportunity to engage him to explain himself thoroughly. He answer'd my Questions with abundance of Frankness. Among other things, he told me that the too great Care he had taken to discover which among all the Christian Religions is the *true one* *, was the Cause of his being actually without Religion; or, at least, of his being reduced to *Natural Religion*.

I desired he wou'd let me know what had most contributed towards fixing him there? It was, says he, the *Contradiction* I found in all Christian Societies, not only the Division which separates them into so *many opposite Bodies*; but the Division of each *Society* within itself into *Parties*, which it is impossible to reconcile.

Those who hold *Predestination*, and those who maintain *Universal Grace*, mutually charge each other with overthrowing the sound Doctrine, and wresting the Scripture; while each Party

* When a Man sets out on some Principle, *without Foundation*, he is infallibly led into *false Consequences*. The *Deist* supposes one Society of Christians ought to be *the only true one*, exclusive of all others. After all his Enquiries, he cannot meet with what he seeks for. Hence he concludes that *the true is no where to be found*.

Party pretends to have found the true Sense of it.

If we believe the former, according to their Interpretation of Scripture, the Deity will be *partial:* will have destined an infinitely larger number of his Creatures to *eternal Torments*, than to Happiness: He will punish those unhappy Creatures for Crimes which they could not avoid. If we may credit the latter, the Deity *would* the Salvation of all Men, he employs every thing in his power for producing that Effect; but *cannot* perform it. After all the Care he has taken, the number of miserable Creatures will be infinitely greater than that of the happy.

Thus far the two Parties are agreed; they are divided only on the *Cause* of so terrible an Effect.

The first place it in the *positive Will* of GOD, who, say they, has a right to form *Vessels* for *Perdition.* The second attribute it to a sort of *Impotency:* the Deity miscarries in the Designs he has formed for the Happiness of his Creatures. At this rate what sort of a Deity would that of the Christians be? If the *Idea* of GOD is really the *Basis* of Religion, what sort of Religion must it be that is established on such *Ideas?*

All these Contradictions, and many more, which each Party pretends are grounded on the same *Scripture*, have induced me to allow it no Attention; to give over all use of a Book

Book which contains Difficulties*, insuperable even to such as are best versed in it.

This Discourse almost struck me dumb; and to change the Subject a little, I ask'd him, whether he had met with many in this way of thinking. Great numbers, replied he; there are several who go still farther, and give into *Pyrrhonism*. But very few of either sort care to pass for what they are; *Interest* is a Barrier they cannot pass. They subject themselves by *Grimace*, to what others do out of devotion: They have one Language for the *Public*, another for *Private* Conversation. This, continued he, is a Baseness and Cowardice, which I have always abhorred. It is unworthy of an *honest Man* to act the *Comedian*, particularly where Religion is concerned.

From some other things he said, I understood that the Appellation of *Christian* serves as a Covering and *Asylum* to all sorts of Characters. I found that this Gentleman distinguished himself from others by an uncommon Frankness; that there is a sort of greatness of Soul, in venturing to incur the Disesteem of all who call themselves Christians, and have no patience with any Person of a different Denomination. I thought it a very melancholy Reflection, that a Man of so good a *Heart* should be so strongly prejudiced, that there is but little room for hoping to reclaim him.

The

* Here again he goes on a groundless Supposition.

The Sequel of the Story of the DEIST.

LETTER II.

SIR,

I Have had no leſs Curioſity than you concerning our *Deiſt*; I talk'd with him yeſterday on ſeveral Subjects, which gave him an opportunity of relating part of his own Hiſtory. I will not undertake to give you the Particulars of it at preſent; that will be done better by Word of Mouth. It is ſufficient that I tell you, that many Years Travels in ſeveral Countries, and among different People, have afforded him an Opportunity of making an exact Enquiry into Religion, or rather into the different Syſtems of Religion, which prevail in each Country.

In every Country, ſaid he, we find Men of Senſe and Learning; Men who are Maſters of the Art of Reaſoning, and who, when heard ſeparately, ſeem'd to argue very juſtly. Wherever I went, I ſought the Acquaintance of Men of this Claſs. I propoſed to hear the Reaſons on both ſides, being myſelf intirely *Neuter*, and then eſpouſe the Party, whoſe Arguments proved the ſtrongeſt * Here my

* Here again the *Deiſt* proceeds on falſe Principles, or ill-grounded Suppoſitions. He begins with ſuppoſing that the *True* is peculiar to one Party only. He then ſuppoſes, that the moſt ſeemingly ſtrong Arguments are the only Demonſtration of the *True*. Theſe Suppoſitions lead him to Concluſions ſtill more falſe.

my Case was like that of an unexperienced Judge; the last Pleadings they hear, appear to them unanswerable, 'till another is produced which carries the Prize. Thus by Arguments which seem'd to me demonstrative, I was obliged to admit of contrary Opinions successively. A Success so different from what a Man might naturally expect, who is in quest of Truth, discouraged me so, that I was resolved to hear no more of it *. Truth always giving me the slip, when I imagined I had found it, I was tempted to think that *Truth* or *Religion* was a mere *Chimæra.* At last I gave into *Pyrrhonism*, and concluded that there is nothing fixt or certain, that all things are equally *problematical*†, that the *True* and the *False* depend on the manner of Reasoning.

I met with several Persons in the same way of thinking; and some well-written Books confirmed me in it. I amused myself with reading

* This Conclusion is very much like that of an honest Man, who had been cheated by *Tartuffe*; *From this time, I renounce the Acquaintance of all good Men.*

† The Art of Reasoning may indeed make all Things *appear* equally *problematical*; but it doth not thence follow that they are *really* so. Men, who know how to view *Things* in their *Origin*, do not permit themselves to be dazzled with *specious Arguments.* On the other hand, such as are acquainted with no other *Evidence* than what arises from a long Train of Arguments, depend more or less on the Abilities of those whom they hear argue. They are often reduced to the necessity of *successively* espousing *Contraries* or *Opposites.* This appears from the *Deists* Experience.

reading such Pieces during a long Voyage. The Captain of the Ship, with whom I frequently conversed, began to come into my Notions; and I was very near making him a Proselyte to *Pyrrhonism*.

But a violent Storm, which put us in imminent danger of Shipwreck, made my most persuasive Arguments vanish. It was then no time for doubting of the Existence of a GOD, for considering the Language of *Conscience* as a *Chimæra*, for silencing it by Arguments in form, or artful Turns; its Authority was felt by intolerable Reproaches, which silenced every other Language. I my self was stung with Remorse for having done the Captain so ill an Office, and was obliged to let him know it, in order, if possible, to repair the Injury I might have done him. I found him entirely undeceived: He told me the Storm and the Impression it had left on his Mind, had had more Force on him than all the Eloquence of my Books.

Thus, from a *Pyrrhonist*, I became what you call a *Deist*.

I then asked him whether he never after that time had the Curiosity to make a farther Enquiry into Religion, and read the Holy Scripture. More than once, replied he: But the Fear of falling back into a *Chaos* of Contradictions, which perhaps would have brought me once more into *Pyrrhonism*, made me stop where I am. I find, after all, that it is better

ter for me to ſtick to a ſmall Number of *undoubted* Principles, which depend on no Book, than to be agitated by an infinity of Opinions taken from the ſame Book, which often contradict one another, or prove the Sources of Contradictions.

Here I aſked him, whether he admitted a *Providence* among his Principles. The Idea, ſays he, that I entertain of a Deity, who can do what he pleaſes, and muſt love his own Work, would perſuade me that he cannot abandon it to blind Chance. This Sentiment ſeems to me as indelible as that of a Deity. But the moment I pretend to judge of it by the Event, and reaſon on the ſtate of Things, on the Diſorder I ſee through the whole World, that *firſt Idea*, or Sentiment diſappears; I loſe all Ideas of Providence*.

What do you think, ſaid I, of *the Immortality of the Soul?* Is that one of the Principles you eſpouſe? I can never perſuade my ſelf, anſwered he, that every thing ends with the preſent Life. A profound Sentiment told me

* This confirms the Obſervations made in the fourth and fifth Letters. When this Man conſults the Idea he entertains of the Attributes of the perfect Being, he there finds the Idea of a *Providence*. It is impoſſible for him to doubt it, while he ſtops at that Point. But the Moment he attempts to reconcile the *Detail* of Events with that *firſt Idea*, he is bewilder'd. He is then tempted to doubt of what he had before received as indiſputable.

me the contrary †, even when I most strove to silence it. I own I have no *distinct Idea* of the *State* of the *Life to come*, and that the Opinions of Divines of different Persuasions, instead of giving me any Satisfaction in that Point, have shock'd me to the last degree.

Among other Opinions, that of *Eternal Damnation* has not a little contributed toward giving me an Aversion to the Christian Religion. What increased my Surprise, was to find Christians, though *divided* on several other Points, *united* in this. An Opinion so injurious to the Deity, so contrary to all Ideas of *natural Equity*, was much more proper for making me a *Pyrrhonist*, than a good Man. This, however, is the *Restraint*, as they term it, which they pretend deters Men from Vice. They undertake to make Men virtuous by the Idea of a *cruel, implacable and unjust* Deity. The Event must show how well this Pretence has succeeded.

I then observed to him, that the Doctrine of *Eternal Damnation* had been long called in question by several judicious Protestants: that I had

† The Ideas, we naturally entertain of a Life to come are rather *negative* than *positive* A Man like this freely owns he has no distinct Ideas of the State of the other World. Tell him you know more of the Matter, that Revelation has given you a Light into it, that it plainly tells us some Men will be eternally happy, others eternally miserable; you thus inspire him with a new Prejudice, and furnish him with a strong Objection against a Religion so contrary to all Ideas of natural Equity. He immediately declares this would be unjust,

had heard talk of a *Book* lately publiſhed, which undertakes to eſtabliſh the contrary Opinion by good Proofs. Had you not quarrell'd with all the Books written by Chriſtians on Religion, continued I, I would undertake to ſhow it you. I might, replied he, read it out of Curioſity; but do not think it would have any Perſuaſion for me. Do you think this Work has any Patrons? It is not yet known, replied I, what Reception the Book will meet with from the Public. There is good reaſon to believe the Vulgar will be ſtartled at it.

We afterwards talked on other Subjects; and I had an Opportunity of obſerving, that ſince the fortunate Storm, which awakened the Senſe of *Truth* or the *Language* of *Conſcience* within him, he had ſhow'd it much Reſpect. I found that he directed that way all the Care and Application which others employ in the Practices required by their Religion.

Methinks, ſaid I, taking my leave of him, in ſpite of all the Averſion you profeſs for the Chriſtian Religion, you retain the *true Principles* of it, and conſequently would be more proper for becoming a Chriſtian, if you are not already ſo, than the Generality of thoſe who imagine themſelves Chriſtians.

How is it poſſible, ſaid he, that I ſhould become a Chriſtian? I have but too well examined the different Religions of Chriſtians. In all probability the Chriſtian Religion has undergone no Change; and I ſhall ſtill meet with

with the same Contradictions I have formerly found in it*. Let me hear no more of it, continued he; I am apprehensive of the Rock of *Pyrrhonism*, on which the View of so many Contradictions once threw me.

But, said I, supposing I should observe to you that the *different Religions* of Christians and the *Christian Religion* are two things: If it were demonstrated to you, that this contains not the Contradictions which you attribute to it, and that it was always free from them: if it was made evident to you, that you have not been startled at IT, but at the *false Representations* given you of it: should I farther tell you, that you respect it in the main, even while you seem to despise it: I own, answer'd he, that I would not believe one Word of the matter, 'till it is proved by Experience. Here we parted, and I have not seen him since.

I met a Friend to whom I communicated what had passed. He seem'd surprised to hear of so much Honesty in a *Deist*: and we agreed that Men are frequently termed *Deists*, who at the bottom are *Pyrrhonists*.

The Story of our Traveller gave us an opportunity of observing the difference between the *Incredulity* of Persons of those two Characters; *Incredulity* becomes criminal not by *Want of Evidence*, but by *wilfully shutting the*

* As he all along builds on the same Supposition, his Conclusions are always the same.

Eyes againſt it. We look'd on the Caſe laſt mentioned to be that of the *Pyrrhoniſt*, as the firſt is that of the *Deiſt*.

The *Pyrrhoniſt*, in order to ſupport his Doubts, is obliged to take ſome pains for obſcuring the Idea of a GOD, and deafening himſelf to the Language of Conſcience, as well as to that of all Nature. An *Evidence* of this kind is ſo *inevitable*, that a Man cannot be honeſt, who pretends to avoid it.

The *Evidence*, which the *Deiſt* ſeeks, is of a different nature. He requires Information concerning the Chriſtian Religion: the Contrariety and Oppoſition, found in Chriſtian Societies, give birth to his Doubts; and the *oppoſite* Senſes, given by thoſe Societies to the Scripture, are the Cauſe of his Averſion to it.

I think, ſaid my Friend, that the *Necromancer*'s Narrative * might help us to an Explication of the *Deiſt*'s Caſe. In order to read the *Book* of *Light*, he has tried all the ſeveral ſorts of *Glaſſes*, made in the gloomy Country. By the help of ſome, he has ſeen *White*, through others *Black*. Hence 'tis concluded that the *Book* itſelf is full of Contradictions, and authoriſes both the *Pro* and the *Con*. He never once ſuſpected that the Contradictions were only in the *Glaſſes*. He would certainly change his Notions, if he endeavour'd to ſee things with his own Eyes. Thus ended our Diſcourſe.

TWO

* Dialogue XVII.

TWO
LETTERS
Concerning the
MISTAKEN POINT
OF
HONOUR
Among WRITERS.

Written in the Year 1734.

Advertiſement of the Bookſeller.

THE two following Letters falling into my Hands, I thought it not improper to place them here.

LETTERS

By the AUTHOR of the

FOURTEEN LETTERS.

YOU inform me, Sir, that Mr. Professor *R*— is engag'd in a new Confutation * of the *Fourteen Letters*; and you suppose, that as soon as this Work shall reach me, I shall resume my Pen to answer it. Give me leave to tell you, Sir, that for this once you have been mistaken in your Conjecture: the Case is extremely different from what it was before.

The Question turns upon one of these two Points: either Mr. *R*—— undertakes to overthrow the *System* of the *Restoration* by establishing the System of an *Eternity of Misery*; or he attacks *the Author* of the *Letters*, by exposing and confuting the weak Places of his Book.

* Or, to speak with more Exactness, an *Answer* to the *Reply*, which ought to be called a *Rejoinder*.

If he attempts the former, I shall readily leave to the Reader the Task of examining, which of the two Systems is best *founded.* If he determines upon the latter, the Criticism will fall upon the *Author only*; in which Case I think it would be imprudent to entertain the Public with *personal* Disputes, in which it is very little interested.

A Writer indeed owes so much Justice to the Public, as to illustrate or unfold what he had at first laid down in too concise a manner, and which might give occasion to dangerous Interpretations, or to such Consequences, as he does not admit.

It is for this Reason, that I thought myself oblig'd to answer Mr. Professor *R*——'s Book. I found, that his Confutation furnish'd me with an opportunity of explaining myself to more advantage, and (what I consider as of greatest Importance) of representing in a clearer Light the *practical Consequences*, which result from this System.

I am not ignorant, that I have still left many things unsaid upon this Subject; but I flatter myself, that I have at least said enough to remove all Ground of perverse Explications or pernicious *Consequences.*

After this, I willingly leave it to the Reader's *Penetration*, and the *Evidence* of the Point itself, to determine the Scale.

It does not appear to me, that the Interest of Truth requires *Replies* and *Rejoinders* without

out end. These sorts of Debates, which arise from the *simple Exposition* of things, degenerate into Disputes of the Writers themselves. It is no longer *Error*, which we attack, but our *Antagonist*. We exclaim against his Want of Judgment. "Was there ever seen such "wretched Reasoning? It is downright Ignorance of the first *Rudiments* of the *School*. "What miserable Logic is this!"

We proceed further: we charge him with Insincerity: we trifle upon his Expressions. "His Quotations are not exact, or at least "too much abridg'd. He eludes the Force "of this Proof: he perverts the Sense of this "Passage: a Person ought to be well skill'd "in the original Languages, to understand "it thoroughly: the ablest Interpreters give "a quite contrary Sense to it. It is true, that "in such and such a Circumstance the *He-*"*brew* Text seems to favour the Author; but "it is true, that in such and such other "more determinate Circumstances, the *Greek* "and *Hebrew* are of our side."

And how will the poor Reader, who for his Edification finds himself embaras's'd in these Perplexities, be able to extricate himself?

What think you, Sir? Would you approve of my Rashness in engaging in a Contest with Mr. Professor, in order to know, which of us is the greater Master of the Rules of Logic, or

the

the better vers'd in the Oriental Languages and the Commentators?

You judge very rightly, that for all these and many other Reasons I should strike sail without the least hesitation. If I were infatuated enough to enter the Lists with Mr. Professor upon Subjects of this nature, I should justly deserve the *Hellebore**, which he mentions.

Far from disputing these Points with him, I acknowledge ingenuously, that many of the *Terms of Art* used in the *Schools* were unknown to me before I read his Book; and I do not doubt, but that, which he is actually composing, will furnish me with Instructions of the same kind; for to do justice, the Irregularities of my Stile, and the Want of Exactness in the Choice of my Expressions, will give him occasions enough to read me Lectures of Criticism.

You must therefore agree, Sir, that in whatever manner Mr. Professor proceeds in his new Confutation, I ought not to be in the least asham'd of abandoning to him the *Field of Battle.*

It is, say you, owning one's self conquer'd, to sit still without making a Reply; and it is concluded, that he, who continues silent, is sensible of the Weakness of his *Cause.* This Conclusion is not an infallible one; and such a *Silence* may arise from other Causes.

It

* See *Ex. Orig.* p. 76.

It may be concluded, that he, who is ſilent, leaves Truth and Time to diſcover, which is the better Cauſe; that he has ſuch a Reſpect for the Publick, as to cut ſhort thoſe tedious Controverſies, which degenerate into Chicanery, and of which generally the only Object is the *Point of Honour* among Writers.

It may be likewiſe concluded, that the Writer in queſtion not having the Reputation of an Author to ſupport, much leſs that of a learned Man, is little concern'd for his own Juſtification.

LETTER II.

SIR,

YOU conſtantly ſuppoſe, that I cannot diſpenſe with my ſelf from anſwering the new Reply, which Mr. Profeſſor is going to publiſh. I cannot tell of what kind that Work will be; but I do not ſee any Reaſon of weight enough to over-balance thoſe, which I have to continue ſilent.

I return to what I have ſaid. What kind of Defence ought I, in your Opinion, to undertake? That of the *Syſtem*, or that of my ſelf? In this latter Caſe, it would be abſolutely playing the fool with my ſelf to preſume to amuſe the Public, merely to inform them, that *I have Reaſon on my ſide*, and that *it was very wrong to attack me*.

My

My View must therefore be to defend the System: but in this Case I shall be reduc'd to mere useless and tedious *Repetitions*; for I do not know, that I can establish it upon other Foundations, than that of *immutable Truths*, confirm'd by the Testimony of the *Scriptures*; nor can I appeal to any other Judge than *Common Sense* or *Right Reason*.

You tell me, that Mr. Professor will oppose me with other Weapons; that his profound Learning * will enable him to overthrow me. In such a case I repeat it, I ought to acknowledge myself conquer'd: the Weapons would by no means be equal. As I am furnish'd with no other than those of common Sense, here is a new Reason for my Silence.

You tell me further, that I shall be obliged to justify my self with regard to the pretended Errors, which will be found in my Book: that pernicious Consequences will be drawn from most of the Propositions, which I advance. But tell me, I request you, whether there is any System, which is not susceptible of such Interpretations; and without going very far, does not that of absolute Predestination, of which Mr. *R*—— is an Advocate, lead evidently to Consequences, which no Person will avow?

These Consequences are much more injurious to Religion, than those, which can be drawn

* The Notion of Learning is made to include the Knowledge of the Oriental Languages, as well as that of various Interpreters and Commentators.

drawn from the Syſtem of the Reſtoration; and the pretended *Relaxation*, which is endeavour'd to be found in it, is not comparable to the Deſtruction * of the *Divine Attributes*.

In ſhort, to ſay, that a Being *can* render all his Creatures happy, and that he *will* not, is to *aſſert* plainly, that ſuch a Being is an *ill one*. To ſay, that he foreſaw, before he created them, that their Miſery would be irrecoverable, and that notwithſtanding this he produc'd them into Being, is to ſay, that he takes pleaſure in the Death of a Sinner, and in eternal Death. To ſay, that when he can annihilate them, he chooſes to ſee them in *everlaſting Torments*, is to impute Cruelty to him.

Mr. *R*——— diſowns theſe Conſequences: this is ſufficient to reſtrain one from aſcribing them to him.

I diſown in the ſame manner beforehand all thoſe, which may be attributed to me contrary to my real Sentiments.

But after all, the Riſque does not ſeem conſiderable on that ſide. If Perſons, who *judge* without *ſeeing*, cry out after others, that this Syſtem tends to deſtroy Religion, there is ſome ground to preſume, that thoſe, who are willing to ſee before they *judge*, will find in this Syſtem

* Tho' this Expreſſion may appear too ſtrong, it is certain, that the Syſtem of *Predeſtination*, join'd to an Eternity of Miſery, involves in it Conſequences, which tend to overthrow the Idea of the Divine Goodneſs and Juſtice.

Syſtem the true Principles of Religion. They will at leaſt do juſtice to the Intentions of the Writer; they will obſerve in him a pacific Spirit, which tends to unite, and not to divide; a Character of *Humanity* and *univerſal Benevolence*, which would not be of diſadvantage to Society, if it had a place amongſt Men, and which would eſpecially be ſuitable to Chriſtians.

If prejudic'd Perſons ſee things in another light, I do not think, that to overwhelm them with Arguments is the proper way to undeceive them.

They are either ſincere, or not. If they are in the latter Caſe, it would certainly be loſing one's labour; if in the former, let us not be in pain for them. *Truth* and *Time* will inlighten them ſooner or later, as far as ſhall be neceſſary; and tho' they ſhould not come to think upon certain Points preciſely as we do, the Misfortune would not be conſiderable. It would be a Weakneſs to pretend to bring all People of good Senſe to our *Point of View*.

June 24,
1734.

FINIS.